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The spirit of the age. and











# THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE AND OTHER SERMONS.

BY

DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D.D.,

*Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed (Dutch) Church at Fifth Avenue  
and 29th Street, New York.*

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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The sermons in this book were taken by dictation after their delivery, and are briefer than in their original form. The purpose has been to make them clear, direct and adapted to the needs of the average man. It is humbly hoped that, however they may fall short of acceptance in other quarters, they may be found helpful to such as are seeking truth for common uses.

The supreme end of preaching is to answer two questions which throb in the universal heart, to wit, "What shall I do to be saved?" and "How may I grow unto the full stature of manhood?" There is no salvation except by faith in Jesus Christ, and the only hope of character is in following him. In preaching, therefore, as in living, we must make everything of Christ. He is first, last, midst and all in all.



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## THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."—REV. I : 13.

We are accustomed to think of the Golden Age as in the remote past. The poets have celebrated a time of primitive simplicity when the earth yielded her increase spontaneously, when men suffered from no pains or diseases and passed from the earth in gentle sleep. Hesiod tells of a gradual decadence from the Golden through the Silver, the Brazen and the Heroic to the Iron Age which marks the lowest level of history, the race being given over to misfortune and sunken in degenerate vices. In Milton's Hymn on the Nativity of Christ he holds us for a time entranced with the music of spheres and angels, and then arrests our contemplation in these words :

" For if such holy song  
Enwrap our fancy long,  
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold."

But time need not run back to fetch it, for the Golden Age is before us. We are drawing nearer to it every day. The century in which we are living is better than any which has gone before it.

" We are living, we are dwelling  
In a grand and awful time;  
In an age on ages telling  
To be living is sublime."

If required to characterize our century in a single word, we should call it the century of light. The golden candlestick is all ablaze. This is true even in our more material life. It is scarcely a hundred years since the homes of the people were illuminated by those primitive lamps which the Scotch call "crusies," such as are taken from the Roman tombs. In 1783 the flat wick was invented by Leger of Paris. Then came illuminating gas. In 1801 Sir Walter Scott wrote from London to a friend in the highlands, "There is a fool here who is trying to light the city with smoke." To-day the lightnings are made to play upon our children's spelling-books : Jupiter Tonans holds the torch for us.

A similar advance has been going on in the moral province. Light is only another name for civilization. Crime loves darkness. Miasms arise after sundown. Truth is light, goodness is light, righteousness is light ; and, blessed be God, the world is being flooded with it.

All light in the natural world is from the sun ; the moon and stars, the blazing torch, fire-flies, glow-worms, all alike borrow their radiance from the great central orb. So is it in the moral world ; all illumination is from God, for God is light. His Church is the golden candlestick through which he shines ; as it is written "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God."

I. But to be more specific we may characterize the present time as *The Age of Reason*. The man makes his protest against the voice of the masses ; the individual against the authority of the powers that ought not to be.

"The most stupendous thought," says Bancroft

“that ever was conceived by man, such as had never been dared by Socrates or the Academy, by Aristotle or the Stoics, took possession of Descartes in his meditations on a November night by the banks of the Danube. His mind separated itself from everything besides, and in the consciousness of its own freedom stood over against tradition, all received opinion, all knowledge, all existence, except itself, thus asserting the principle of Individuality as the key-note of all coming philosophy and political institutions. Nothing was to be received as truth by man which did not convince his reason. A new world was opened up in which every man was thenceforth to be his own philosopher.”

Think! Think for yourself. Let no man, no Synod, no political or ecclesiastical council do your thinking for you. This is the spirit of Protestantism. The protest is, *First*, against the authority of the civil power over heart and conscience. It found utterance when Peter and John were forbidden by the Jewish court to preach the Gospel in the porch of Solomon's Temple: “Whether it be right,” said they, “to hearken unto you more than to God, judge ye; for we cannot but declare the truth.” The protest is, *Second*, against the authority of the Church. It found expression on a certain December day when Luther marched out of the gate of Wittenberg followed by a company of independent thinkers and burned the Pope's Bull. So far so good. The persecutions of the ages have arisen from an effort on the part of the secular and the ecclesiastical powers to tyrannize over the right of personal judgment in matters pertaining to God.

But here we pause; in all great moral move-

ments the pendulum is sure to swing too far. To-day we mark a *Third* protest, to-wit: against the authority of the Word of God. The skipper of a vessel on the high seas may be excused for rejecting the counsel of every passing fisherman, but if his independence leads him to throw over chart and compass, he shows himself a fool. The Bible is our only chart, prayer is our magnetic needle and God himself is our north star. At this moment there is said to be a revival in Romanism among some of the European nations. The reason is plain: For years many theological teachers in the universities have busied themselves in an attempt to overthrow the inerrancy of Holy Writ, but the human mind must have authority to rest on; if not the Bible, then the Pope. It were far better to lean upon a spurious infallibility of the decrepit old father on the Tiber, than to acknowledge no authority at all. Pope or Bible, one or the other it must be.

The historian Guizot set out as a free-thinker. He said, "Reason will solve all." But as his years increased he found himself in a whirlwind of conflicting doubts and perplexities, and finally, with unspeakable joy, he fled to the authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God.

II. The present time may still further be characterized as *The Age of Humanity*. There are those who say the Church has dreamed too much of heaven; it would be better to make a heaven here and now. And indeed it is the function of the Church to touch human life at every point and to make this world a better place to live in.

There never was a time since the foundation of the world when so much attention was given to soci-

ology. This is as it should be. The Church has to do with society. It has never, indeed, been wholly oblivious of its responsibilities at this point. The home, the public school and the hospital are the three great pillars that uphold the social fabric, and these three are Christian institutions. Their lights are kindled at the golden candlestick. If men are more kindly disposed toward one another than they used to be, it is by reason of the fact that the leaven of the gospel has been leavening the lump of human life. Our Lord himself set the example when he went down to the porches of Bethesda where lay the blind and halt and withered. As his disciples we must needs go after him to the homes of the poor and erring and the sorrowing. It is our business to do good as we have opportunity unto all men.

The Church has also to do with the body politic. "Give me the penny," said Jesus. "Whose image and superscription is this?" "Cæsar's." "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." There are things going on in the city of New York that ought to rouse the indignation of every follower of Christ. It might be well at this juncture, instead of confining our dreams to the pearly gates and golden streets of the New Jerusalem, were we to breathe a little of the ozone of heaven into the life of New York. Theft, uncleanness, licensed fraud and nameless crime are all about us; and the sorrow of it is that our custodians of law and order are the head and front of the whole offending. It is the business of the Church to puncture this abscess; it is the function of the gospel to heal it.

The Church has a duty to discharge with re-

spect to every current reform that looks to the betterment of the community. The overthrow of intemperance and of the social evil, the elevation of womanhood, the vindication of the rights of childhood, the sanitation of the slums, all these are within her province. The gospel has an application not merely to our spiritual nature, but to every point in the circumference of human life.

But here again the pendulum swings too far. Much of what is called Christian sociology is mere sentimental vamping. There are some things to be remembered. One is, that the soul is of infinitely more value than the body. To heal a man's physical infirmities in the name of the Lord Jesus while neglecting the far more important matter of his spiritual welfare, is unspeakable folly. "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And another thing to be remembered is, that eternity is longer than time. To make the present life sweet and wholesome, to beautify the lower home, to cultivate the mind in love of things charming and picturesque; what are these indeed when one reflects that life is only an handbreath here, while the life hereafter is for incalculable aeons. The central thought of the gospel is salvation. The greatest need of man is always a spiritual need. The question of supreme importance now, as always, is this, What shall I do to be saved?—saved from the shame, the bondage and the penalty of sin. Bethesda is not the central fact of Christianity. Calvary is its centre. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The minister who in his eagerness to keep abreast of

the age, devotes himself to social science to the neglect of his more important work, is blind to the fundamental principle of the gospel of Christ. We are to seek, first of all, the Kingdom of God.

A long time ago there was in Scotland a chain-bridge famous for its massive strength. A French engineer came over and took its dimensions, and in due time built a similar structure on the Seine at Marly. It was, however, much lighter and airier than its prototype. When its gates were opened to the multitude it began to sway to and fro ominously beneath their foot-fall and presently gave way. The trouble with this bridge was that its architect had omitted the middle bolt, thinking it but a clumsy feature at best. There are those who are making a similar mistake in these days in their eagerness to press the application of the gospel upon the temporal wants of the people. The middle bolt of the whole gospel fabric is the cross of Jesus Christ—God's plan for the deliverance of the race from sin.

III. The time in which we are living may still further be characterized as *The Age of Spiritual Dynamics*. We are fond of calling it the Missionary Century. More has been done for the propagation of the gospel among the nations in this century than in all that have gone before it.

The key-note of the great propaganda is the word "Go!" Our Lord came back after his crucifixion and marked out the campaign for the conquest of the world. He said to his disciples, "Go ye everywhere and proclaim the gospel." But for eighteen hundred years, the Church seemed unwilling to believe that he really meant it. Then came William Carey, the consecrated cobbler, and with him other like-

mindful ones who heard the Master's marching orders and were prepared to take him at his word. So the glorious work began. No sooner did the Church hearken to that injunction, "Go!" than the doors of the nations began to fly open. To-day a war is being waged between the latest born of constitutional governments and the last remaining of the old barbaric sovereignties. What is to be the outcome? Japan will rise to the position of a first-class power, and if so it will be by virtue of her acquiescence in the principles of Christian civilization. The great wall of China will fall down as flat as the ancient walls of Jericho, that the army of the cross may enter to possess the land. Four hundred millions of people will be made accessible to the good news of salvation.

In the meantime the last of the world's continents is being prepared for the same gracious incursion. It is likely that the centre of operations for the next century will be Africa; the great battle of Armageddon will be fought there. If the western edge of that continent were laid so as to touch our Pacific coast, its eastern edge would overlap Ireland. Its population is four times that of America. All this is fallow ground waiting the seed sowing of the truth. Ethiopia is stretching out her hands toward God. Thus the gates are all unbarred. No sooner did the Church hearken to the word "Go!" than God himself uttered the open sesame which sprung the bolts and rolled back the mighty doors.

And along with this we mark the fulfilment of the glorious promise. The missionaries have gone nowhere alone; the Master has always accompanied them with his benediction. It was a wonderful thing that he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven



and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and evangelize all nations ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." Mark the comprehensiveness of that word—all power, all nations, all things, all the days.

Missions a failure ! Nay, they are approved by the logic of history as a glorious success every way. At the beginning of this century the East India Company said, "The sending of missionaries to evangelize India is the maddest dream that ever entered a human mind." Sir Rivers Thompson, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, says, "Christian missions have accomplished more for the good of India than all other agencies combined." How could it be otherwise ? The word of the omnipotent God is pledged to the work.

It is a calamity for any man to be behind the time. No man, however, can be abreast of the age who does not fall in with this great movement for the evangelization of the nations.

" There's a fount about to stream,  
There's a light about to gleam,  
There's a midnight darkness changing into day ;  
Men of thought and men of action,  
Clear the way ! "

It is glorious to live now. The gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim is better than the whole vintage of Abiezer. Farewell to the past, to the darkness of vice and superstition, to ignorance and oppression ; and welcome the future—the light of the morning, the rattling down of the strongholds of iniquity, the shoutings of the sons of God !

But wonderful as is the present time, a greater

century awaits us. "I hear the sound of conflict yonder," said blind John of Bohemia at the Battle of Crecy. He was old and blind and wounded unto death. His French troops were wavering ; he called to them, "I hear the sound of glorious conflict yonder ! Ye are my vassals ; gather about me close, and lead me on so far that I may swing my sword once more !" Oh ! who that believes in God, in the glorious promise of the gospel, in the logic of events, does not long to see what the future shall bring forth to the glory of God ? I hear the footfall of a mighty company turning the spur of Olivet, and those that go before cast their garments in the way and join with those that follow after, "Hosanna ! Hosanna ! to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." I hear the ringing of bells far yonder : bells of heaven and all the bells of earth echoing back their welcome to the Golden Age when Jesus shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth.

" Ring out the old, ring in the new ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true !  
Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace !  
Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be !"

## THE SONS OF THUNDER.

"And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James ; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder."—MARK iii. 17.

Close to the water's edge of Lake Tiberias dwelt the fisherman Zebedee. The scene before his cottage was such as to inspire thoughts of a more glorious world and a nobler life than were suggested by his boats and nets—"a burnished mirror set in a frame of rounded hills and rugged mountains rising and rolling backward and upward " to where hoary Hermon seemed to touch the skies. The fisherman and his good wife Salome had prospered in temporal things. The Lord, moreover, had blessed them with two noble sons, now in the early vigor of manhood, giving promise of eminence and usefulness. They had been instructed in the village schools and under the tuition of the rabbis they had made themselves familiar, not only with the Law and Prophets, but with current systems of philosophy. Thrice every year they had gone up to Jerusalem with their father to attend the great national festivals. There they had watched the burning of the sacrifices, those flaming prophecies of the long-looked-for Messiah, and had heard the stately chanting of the Messianic psalms, and had stood, wondering and dreaming, in Solomon's porch under the vine with its golden clusters typifying the glory of Messiah's reign. Thus they learned

to watch the future for his coming. From Purim and Passover they returned to their fishing boats, to see in every daybreak, in every kindling splendor of the clouds above Hermon, a new prophecy of the rising of the Son of Righteousness with healing in his beams. The elder of these brothers was energetic and fearless. He loved to be abroad upon the lake when the winds came rushing down the narrow defiles and lashed its waters into fury. Not so the younger; his happiest days were when the sea was restful and untroubled. Yet in his gentle spirit there was a slumbering fire, and time would show him to be "not a dreamer among shadows, but a man among men."

In those days came John the Baptist preaching and saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The two brothers, in company with many of their townsmen, went over to the fords of Bethabara to see and hear. There among the rocks by the swift river stood the hermit-priest in the midst of an eager multitude of listeners. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord! The time is at hand. I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh one after me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire. Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." So saying, he baptized them in the river and bade them watch. The brothers were thrilled with expectancy, believing the fulfilment of their long-cherished hopes was nigh at hand. One day as they were standing with the multitude on the river bank, the Baptist pointed to a solitary figure passing near by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" They

followed him at once. "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" "Come and see." And they abode with him that night. A night with Jesus! Did ever a soul in the gloaming or in the night watches hold tryst with him, and not discover that he was the veritable Son of God? But they could not tarry long. It was the summer season of labor, and returning to Bethsaida they betook themselves to their usual tasks.

One morning they were seated by the shore, washing their nets. On a sudden, he stood beside them, and glancing toward their nets and out upon the waters—types of life's larger field and more important work—he said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This was their formal ordination to the apostolate. And they rose and followed him. From this time forward they were with him in all the important events of his ministry. They saw his wonderful works of healing, they heard him speak as never man spake of the eternal verities, they listened to his sermon on the mount in which he set forth the qualifications of citizenship in the kingdom of truth and righteousness. As time passed they were more and more confirmed in the thought that he had come to set up an earthly throne. On one occasion, their mother, Salome, asked of Jesus, that her two sons might sit "the one on his right hand, the other on the left in his kingdom." And he answered, "Ye know not what ye ask"; and turning to them, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and can ye be baptized with my baptism?" They answered, "We can." Little did they dream how their wish was to be fulfilled.

As they continued to follow Jesus they, with Peter, made up "the chosen three." They dwelt

with him in the glory of Mount Tabor, when his garments were white and glistening and his face as the sun shineth in his strength. They were with him in his triumphal entry when the company going on before and following after cried, "Hosanna! Hosanna! to him that cometh in the name of the Lord." They were with him in the upper chamber on the night of the last passover,

" . . . that dark, that doleful night,  
When all the powers of hell arose  
Against the Son of God's delight."

In the shadow of the olive trees at Gethsemane they heard his prayer, "O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." One of them saw him nailed to the accursed tree when the light went out and the darkness was pierced by that strange cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" And was this the cup of which they were to drink and was this the baptism with which they were to be baptized? They had not long to wait. In the year 44 the sword of persecution was drawn by Herod Agrippa against the followers of Christ. James was apprehended. So calm and fearless was his demeanor before his judges, that Clement of Alexandria says that his accuser greeted him with a brotherly kiss, saying, "Thou hast persuaded me that Jesus is the Christ!" He was led out beyond the walls; there was a swift flash of the blade and his head rolled from the block. He had drained the purple cup; he had passed under the baptism of blood.

But John lived on. Nero kindled the living torches, smearing the disciples with pitch and burning them to illumine the revels in his garden, but the fire passed

over him. Titus marched against Jerusalem, reduced it by the slow process of starvation and reared a line of awful crosses on the surrounding hills, but this calamity also passed over him. It was not without a peculiar fitness that in course of time the Benjamin of the Twelve became the patriarch of the multiplying churches. He was settled as "Episcopus" of the Ephesian congregation and from that Gibraltar of paganism he sent out his messages of encouragement to the scattered saints. It was during this pastorate that he wrote the "Gospel of St. John." There is a tradition that no rain fell upon the uncovered oratory while he wrote this marvellous presentation of the divineness of Jesus. The emblem of St. John's Gospel is the eagle—"bird of the loftiest flight, the keenest eye, the surest nest among the cliffs." The Apostle's voice went crashing through current systems of unbelief, making havoc of sciences and philosophies alike with its solemn declaration: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

In the year 64 the demon of persecution again awoke and John was one of its victims. He was banished to the lonely Island of Patmos in the Aegæan Sea. The event is commemorated in an old Latin hymn:

"Through Rome's infuriate city,  
From Caesar's judgment chair,  
They drag Christ's loved disciple,  
The Saint with silver hair,  
To desert islands banished,  
With God the exile dwells,  
And sees the future glory  
His wondrous writing tells."

I. We are accustomed to think of John as *The Apostle of Love*. Our conception of any character is usually based on a single episode. The Virgin Mary is known to us by her posture in the annunciation—the adoring upturned face, so well translated by Raphael, and the words, “Behold thy handmaid! Be it unto me even as thou wilt.” Paul on Mars Hill, his eye enkindled with ardor and his mean presence glorified by the enthusiasm of a noble cause; Peter declaring to the multitude on the day of Pentecost that their hands are red with the innocent blood of Jesus; Judas in the garden kissing the Saviour’s cheek; these are character sketches standing out from the narrative and catching the eye like the masterpieces in the gallery of the Louvre. What scene in the life of the Apostle John will best describe him? See him in the upper chamber reclining on the Saviour’s breast, his face all radiant with love. We are reminded how Cyrus at a certain festival gave to each of his officers a costly gift: to one a jewelled garment, to one a golden cup, to another a badge of martial prowess; then turning to his favorite, he put his arm around him, saying “Chrysantes, thou hast my love.” This was the distinction put upon St. John that night before the crucifixion—the affection of the Son of God. Oh, gift of gifts! He never forgot that paschal feast. It was the stimulation of his three score years of labor for Christ. It moved him to a most tender compassion for all.

It is related that when a young man of Ephesus, who had made profession of the Christian faith, had fallen under temptation, mingled in the revels about the midnight fires and finally attached himself



to a notorious band of robbers, the old Apostle went everywhere in search of him. He exposed himself on a dangerous road among the ravines and rejoiced when a horde of wild looking men fell upon him with threatening cries and pinioned him. "Lead me to your captain," he said. The young man would have fled at his approach, but John held out his arms affectionately, saying, "My son, if any man sin there is an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous." He bent over the youth with all the tender affection of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep and saw him brought back to his first love.

It is related, also, that when the pastor of the Ephesian Church was so old and feeble that he must needs be borne in a litter through the streets to meet his congregation, he would lift his hands and say, "Little children, love one another."

Love is indeed the greatest thing in the world. The gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, all other gifts shall cease, but love abideth ever. Luther calls it "the shortest and longest divinity; shortest in words, but longest in use and practice." Love never faileth. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

II. We know this Apostle also as *A Son of Thunder*; so the Master called him, nor is there any incongruity here. Only strong natures are capable of earnest love. Love prompts to energy and noble deeds. An apostle of love is ever a son of thunder. When the people of a certain village refused to entertain Jesus the indignation of his beloved friend would have, on the instant, called down fire from heaven upon them. As minister of the Ephesian Church he was required to confront the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, and they found in him a foeman worthy of their steel. He

was ready to face a drawn sword. A roaring lion had no terrors for him, because the love of Christ constrained him. He declared the glorious gospel with a voice accustomed to command amid the storms of Genesaret. In his preaching there was no mumbling of words, no mincing of phrases. He characterized the man who is false to his profession as a liar, the man who hated his fellows as a murderer, the man who denied the great verities as anti-Christ. To the Elect Lady he wrote, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed : for he that bid-deth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

III. But this Apostle was known by still another name, *Theologos*—a lover and teacher of spiritual things. If times and places are of God's ordinance, it was assuredly not chance that selected Patmos for his home. It was encompassed by the deep waters of the Mediterranean, "now purple as wine, now green as an emerald, flushing and flashing in the light like the plumage of a dove," stretching away into the calm distance, or leaping and roaring in storms. What a closet for a man to dream in ! What peace the waves murmured ! What battle clarions they sounded ! It was not long ere the bereaved churches heard from their venerable pastor in the most thrilling letter that ever was penned by mortal man. He being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day saw a glorious panorama of visions that passed before him in quick succession : a golden candlestick and one walking in the midst of it like unto the Son of Man. A sea of glass mingled with fire ; and an innumerable company of harpers playing on golden harps and singing, "Holy ! Holy ! Lord God Almighty !" A

company assembled to witness the opening of a book with seven seals; and, as the seals are broken with successive trumpet blasts, the annals of all future history are unrolled. The marshalling of the hosts of Heaven and hell to the great battle of Armageddon; the white company, led on by Shiloh with garments dipped in blood, meets the legions of darkness in mortal fray; the sound of clashing arms; then rattling chains; and Satan is cast into the bottomless pit and the smoke of torment ascendeth. The marriage supper of the Lamb; the bridegroom brings home his exiled bride without spot or blemish and leads her to his throne amid the acclamations of the heavenly multitude. The New Jerusalem, with gates of pearl and golden streets descending from God out of heaven. A last glorious sun-burst! a voice, "Behold, I come quickly!" And the old dreamer answers, "Amen! Even so come, Lord Jesus!" The flame-pointed pen lies idle on the parchment, the busy hands are still, and from the silent shores of Patmos the soul of that disciple, whom Jesus loved, has gone up to lean again upon his bosom at the feast. "The spirit of this gracious man," says Tertullian, "still wanders among us." Doubtless it does; a calming and sanctifying influence. Good men, being dead, yet live and labor. "The body of John," says the Apocrypha, "lies buried in peace but his influence lives forever. All people will tell of his wisdom, and the congregation of saints will declare his praise."

An ancient collect prescribes this prayer: "Good Lord, do thou enlighten us with the doctrine and fill us with the mind of thy blessed evangelist, that we may at last enter into thy beatific presence and enjoy the rewards of everlasting life."

## YOM KIPPUR.

"And this shall be a statute forever unto you : that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or of a stranger that sojourneth among you : for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."—LEV. xvi. 29, 30.

The Jews are a most interesting people. In respect to wealth, intellectual power, and historic influence, they hold a prominent place, and, yet, they are ostracized the world over. The Jew is a man without a country ; a cosmopolite whose only patriotism is in the memory of a glorious past. The government of ancient Israel was a theocracy and as such had its centre on Mount Zion. The overthrow of the temple marked the destruction of the Jewish ritual ; yet, the rites and ceremonies of that olden time are preserved and celebrated in miniature, even to this day. The public press has made mention of the recent celebration of Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement.\* It is the custom on this occasion for each member of a Jewish household to sacrifice a fowl as a sin-offering. The victim is waved thrice and then consecrated to death in the significant words, " May this be my substitute. It shall go unto death that I may enter the life of the blessed forever " This is, substantially, all that remains of the ancient

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\* Preached, October 14, 1894.

ceremonial. It is sadly significant that the scattered Israelites should so tenaciously cling to it.

The tenth day of the seventh month was set apart in the Levitical Law as the Day of Atonement. It was the Great Day. All the other anniversaries in the Jewish calendar were of slight importance as compared with it. This towered above them like Hermon among the hills. In the wilderness journey it was looked forward to with solemn anticipation. No food was to be partaken of ; no work was to be done ; there must be no sound of hammer or of axe ; if the people spoke it was in muffled tones. At sound of the trumpet they gathered in the doorway of their tents and turned their faces toward the tabernacle in the midst of the encampment. The interest was centred on three important events : *First, The usual morning sacrifice.* The high priest in his golden robes—so called because they were embroidered with threads of gold—offered a lamb with a deal of flour and a small measure of beaten oil. This was followed by the benediction : “The Lord bless thee and keep thee ; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up upon thee the light of his countenance and give thee peace.” *Second, An offering by the high priest for himself, and his brethren in the holy office.* He retired, divested himself of his golden garments, bathed himself and put on white. These robes without a thread of color were called “The Garments of Holiness.” He then came forth and proceeded to the brazen altar ; he slew a bullock, caught its blood in a basin and bearing that in one hand, with a golden censer in the other full of live coals from the altar on which he had thrown a

double handful of incense, he entered the Holy Place, waved the censer before the golden altar and sprinkled the blood before the Holiest of All. *Third, The atonement for the people.* This was the great business of the day. The high priest came forth into the open court where two goats were awaiting him. Lots were cast by which one of the goats was devoted to Jehovah and the other to Azazel. He then slew the goat which had been devoted to Jehovah and, bearing again a basin of blood, entered the tabernacle. The supreme moment had come. The people saw him lift the curtain and pass in. They could only imagine what occurred within the sacred enclosure. He passed between the golden candlestick and the table of shew-bread to the fine-twined curtain which hung before the Holiest of All; he lifted it, entered and stood before the Ark of the Covenant; he sprinkled the blood seven times before it and then on the mercy-seat; bowing down he made supplication for the people; then he retraced his steps. In the outer court the goat for Azazel awaited him. In the sight of the people he laid both hands upon its head and pressed hard to signify the transfer of their sins. Then the goat was led away by the hand of a fit person to the unknown land.

What did this mean? Surely so elaborate a ceremony could not have been without significance. There must have been something behind it.

I. To begin with, it set forth the tremendous fact of *sin*. It was this that prompted the gathering of the great multitude who viewed the solemnities with the most profound interest. There are some considerations which make sin an inexpressibly terrible thing. *First, it is universal.* What a relief it would

be to hear that somewhere on earth a tribe had been discovered in whose character and consciousness there was no trace of the unclean thing. But alas! there is no such people. The great stone book of nature records the history of all events in the physical world. You may see in the old red sand-stone the traces of rain drops that fell thousands of years ago. By inspecting them you may tell from what quarter the wind was blowing when the rain fell. So in human nature we note an impartial record of all that has transpired in the moral province. It remains to be seen that there has ever been a time or anywhere a people that did not bear the mark of the serpent's trail. *Second, it is distributive.* We are told by physicians that there is probably no person who can be said to be perfectly well. The beating of the pulse, the complexion, the twitching of the eye-lids will show the presence of disease in some form. All have not the same malady, but all are sick with a sickness which will ultimately be unto death. The moral malady, however, is the same with all men. The Lord looked down from heaven to see if there was any that wrought righteousness and behold there is none that doeth good, no, not one. *Third, it is all-pervasive.* Its effect is like the venom of the cobra, which sends a fever through nerve and sinew, through vein and artery, insinuating itself throughout the body to its very finger tips. Sin defiles the heart, distorts the reason, perverts the conscience and paralyzes the will; "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness, but all is wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." *Fourth, it is a mortal malady.* There is no resisting the force of

retribution. The law is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Its operation is slow, but sure, like the onward movement of a glacier. Would a Swiss peasant think to oppose it by bracing his form against it? or, by building a barricade against it? So irresistible is the automatic operation of the law of consequences. Death is the corollary of sin.

II. The other fact which was impressively presented on Yom Kippur was *atonement*; and it is noteworthy that the thought of blood-atonement is as universal as the conviction of sin. Sacrifice is a world-wide institution. The altars are reared and fires are kindled everywhere. Not only lambs and bullocks are offered, but children go through the fires to Moloch and human hecatombs are laid upon the altars. Yet, obviously, blood has no virtue in itself. It is incredible that any one should believe that the killing of a dumb creature should be an equivalent for the sentence which has been passed upon a human soul. What said Isaiah? "God is not pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil." What said St. Paul? "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." What said Isaac Watts?

"Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Can give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away the stain."

There must be something under the surface here. If we are indeed the children of the living God, is it natural to suppose that he would leave us in our lost estate without some intimation of his love and his desire to save us? We have this intimation in the universal institution of sacrifice. It speaks of



the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

In the ceremonial of the great Day of Atonement there was nothing which did not point forward to the gospel. It was a great prophetic Ober-ammergau with Jesus at its centre dying for the world's sin. We note here three objects of peculiar interest. *First, the high priest in his "Garments of Holiness."* He who makes atonement for sin must be himself free from the unclean thing. Where shall we look for such an one among the children of men? There is only one in all history who, by common consent, stands clothed in spotless white. Of Jesus it is written, "There was no guile in his heart; there was no guile on his lips." *Second, the blood of the sacrifice.* Death for death! Life for life! Life for the guilty by the death of the innocent! And the substitute must be of such a character as that the sacrifice of his life shall be the equivalent of the indebtedness of all sinners to the offended law. The high priest sprinkled the blood seven times before the mercy-seat. Seven times in token of completeness. But where shall we find one who as the antitype of this sacrifice shall be able to make a complete expiation of the world's sin? He must be infinite. The lamb for this sacrifice must be the Lamb of God. One pang in the heart of Jesus was of more value than all the pains of the convicted here and all the anguish of the lost for ever. His blood is of infinite value in this atonement, for he was very God of very God. *Third, the scapegoat.* The high priest having laid the sins of the people upon the head of the scapegoat, it was led forth by the hands of a fit person to Azazel,—the land of separation. Yonder it goes along the mountain

path, up the heights further and further—the people in their doorways stand shading their eyes and gazing after it, further and further until in the dimness it passes from view—and with the scapegoat has gone their sin into the unknown land. So Jesus bearing the burden of our sin, was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness and along the dreary path of homelessness and friendlessness, of want and weariness ; led onward still to the judgment hall, to Gethsemane, and up the heights alone, forsaken, under the dark shadow of the cross, into the deep night that enfolded it. The cry, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” marked his coming into the land of separation. The cry, “It is finished!” was uttered when he, bearing upon his breaking heart the burden of the world’s guilt, passed from our sight. He bore that guilt away to Azazel, to the land of oblivion, where God has put it behind his back, to remember it no more against us.

III. But where is the *personal factor* in all this? The people who stood round about on Yom Kippur were all with one consent represented in the service of the high priest. The heathen who looked on possibly from the surrounding hillsides had no part nor lot in it. When the high priest laid his hands upon the scapegoat and pressed hard, every soul in the encampment might say, “He is laying my sins upon it.” Christ died for all, but the great sacrifice is effective for only such as have a personal concern in it. The benefits of the atonement are conditioned upon the exercise of faith. Only believe ! Faith is the hand that appropriates it. A few years ago a party of Americans ascending Mt. Blanc were overtaken by a storm and lost their way. Their bodies

were afterward found within twelve feet of a place of shelter. Five steps would have saved them. The salvation of the cross is nearer than that. One step will save us, the step that brings us face to face with Jesus, to put our hand into his and commit our destiny to him. Here is the one thing needful. The supreme moment in the history of every sinner is when, knowing his sin and hearing the call of the Saviour, he answers "I will." It may be that some of us are at this moment standing under the cross and looking upon the great sacrifice. All that remains is for us to say, "I consent to it."

## THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE.

"The Lord looseth the prisoners: the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down."—PSALM cxlvi. 7, 8.

We speak of the philosophy of history, and the phrase is well chosen; for history is not a series of accidents, but a chain of logical sequences. Event grows out of event, to-day out of yesterday, and all are linked together by a common providence. The Lord reigneth; men and nations, generations and aeons, are subject unto Him.

One summer day in 1572 the Duke of Alva and Catharine de Medici met on the border of Spain. It was a famous meeting. These two were come together as the agents of the Holy Catholic Church to apportion the world between them. To the Duke of Alva fell the task of subjugating the Netherlands with their Protestant dependencies. How well he fulfilled his appointed task, let the story of the Spanish Fury, the heroism of the Beggars of Holland and the glory of the Dutch Republic attest. Catharine de Medici took it upon herself, in particular, to exterminate the Protestantism of France. Her persistent appeals to Charles IX. were in vain, however; until, at last, worn out by her importunity, he exclaimed, "The order of extermination

shall be signed on one condition, to wit : that no Huguenot shall survive to shake an accusing finger at me !” The awful sequel is matter of common fame. At midnight of August 4th, 1572, the bell of St. Germain rang out the tocsin and the city was given over to slaughter. The king himself, now quite forgetful of the claims of mercy, stood at one of the windows of the Louvre, arquebuse in hand, firing down upon the inoffensive Protestants fleeing for their lives. The Duke of Guise ran madly through the streets, leading on the royal forces and crying, “Kill ! kill !” A hundred thousand of the flower of France were slain. In commemoration of that night a medal was struck bearing on one side the effigy of an angel uplifting in one hand the cross, in the other a dripping sword with the inscription “*Strages Ugenottorum*,” “Slaughter of the Huguenots” ; on the obverse the image and superscription of Pope Gregory XIII. A bloody reckoning was made that day ; the years must atone for it.

“The mills of God grind slowly,  
Yet they grind exceeding small ;  
Though with patience He stands waiting,  
With exactness grinds He all.”

But despite all precautions taken to prevent the escape of a single Huguenot, there were many who remained in France. Then followed a hundred years of more or less vigorous efforts to remove them. They were persecuted, exiled, put under the ban, and still they lived and, in out-of-the-way places, with simple rites, worshipped their God. One by one their liberties were taken away until, October 22d, 1685, occurred the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. By this summary act the last remnant of the charter of

Huguenot freedom passed away. The Protestants of France had no longer the right to live. Toll the bell! The work of extermination is surely accomplished. Yet, not so; man proposes but God disposes. The Huguenots still lived and the black clouds of retribution were gathering fast. The last chapter was not written yet.

We now come to another of the momentous dates in French history, July 14th, 1789. But before noting the important event which occurred on that day, it will be well to observe that the French people, not merely Protestants but the people generally, had reached the extreme point of misery. For a long time there had been ominous mutterings. "Blood!" "To Arms!" "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," were written on the dead walls of Paris by unknown hands. Right or wrong, the people were accustomed to associate their misfortunes with the Bastille, the royal prison in which many of the truest patriots were doomed to a living death. It towered aloft frowning like an evil spirit in their midst. Not a few of the devoted friends of the people, arrested under the authority of *Lettres de Cachet* had disappeared under that portal whereon might well have been written the legend which Dante placed above the gates of the Inferno, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here!" The authorities, apprehensive lest the fury of the people should be directed toward the Bastille, had recently re-enforced its garrison and furnished its magazine with one hundred and thirty-five barrels of gunpowder. On the preceding night the people had assembled in multitudes on the quays, on the bridges and along the boulevards. There were old men, women wearing red caps, many driven

desperate by hunger and want and unspeakable hardships. At daybreak the cry was raised, "*A la Bastille!*" "*A la Bastille!*" But they had no arms, nor ammunition. The walls of the great prison were forty feet thick and it was garrisoned by veterans. The mob surged through the streets to the Hotel-de-Ville, where the doors were battered down and twenty-eight thousand muskets secured. Then on to the Bastille. Meanwhile De Launey, the warden, had not been inactive. He had loaded his cannon with grape-shot and dragged six cart-loads of paving-stones to the summit of the walls. He stood listening now to the distant murmur in the town; he saw the black mass approaching in the distance; heard the cry, "*A la Bastille!*" and as the multitude closed in about the stronghold, he confidently hurled his defiance at them. For hours the multitude raged vainly under the towering walls. It was now noon. A blacksmith named Louis Tournay ran toward the drawbridge with hatchet in hand, climbed the roof of a guard-house, and reached the great chain that held the bridge; the bullets from above rained thick and fast about him; he began to hammer at the chain; presently the drawbridge fell and the mob crossed over. They were in the open court. The firing from above was met by firing from below. De Launey being summoned to surrender to the Citizens' Guard, answered with renewed defiance. Straw was brought in cart-loads and heaped against the gates. A battering ram was improvised. At half past five o'clock there was a great shout. The gates fell in. The Bastille was taken. A thousand men crowded through the great gateway, ten thousand more pushing from behind. De Launey had seized a torch and

would have fired the magazine. The mob required him to pass with his torch along the dark passages of the great prison. One by one its gloomy cells were opened. An old man, bewildered, tried to defend himself against his rescuers. Another invited them to his hospitality, proclaiming himself as "Master of Immensity." Still another, whose beard had grown to his waist, inquired after the health of Louis XV.; reason had fled. The sight of these wretched prisoners still further inflamed the passions of the mob. Women with knives in their hands fell upon De Launey; a moment later his head was raised upon a pike. Out from the portals of the Bastille came the mob bearing seven prisoners on their shoulders and with eight gory heads carried aloft. A messenger made all haste to bring the tidings to the king. "Is it a revolt?" he asked. "Nay, sire," replied the herald, "it is a revolution!" And indeed that was the beginning of the French Revolution. God is a sure paymaster. It was not long ere Paris was filled with carnage. Its gutters ran with blood.

At this time Hannah More wrote to Horace Walpole, "Poor France! Though I am sorry that the lawless rabble are triumphant, I cannot help hoping that some good will arise from the destruction of the Bastille." We can now look backward upon this event from the distance of a hundred years and it is not difficult to see how, by the working of divine providence, great good has resulted from it.

I. To begin with, it impressed on France forever a lesson in human rights. A wide gulf had been opened between the aristocracy and the people. The superior classes claimed everything; the unshod people had no rights. The 14th of July was a great



levelling day. The life of Sombreuil being demanded by the mob, his daughter cried, "Spare him ! He is my father." His life was spared on condition that this daughter would drink a cup filled with the blood of aristocrats. The devoted girl, shuddering, drained the cup. Horrors like this were the inevitable outcome of long centuries of sufferings on the part of the down-trodden people. They would have no aristocracy save that of worth and character. The echoes of the American Declaration of Independence—all men are created free and equal and with certain inalienable rights—had come across the sea. Over in Scotland Robert Burns was singing of the dignity of man,

"A prince can mak a belted knight,  
A marquis, duke, and a' that ;  
But an honest man's aboon his might,—  
Guid faith, he maunna fa' that ?  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Their dignities, and a' that ;  
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,  
Are higher ranks than a' that."

II. The outcome of this great popular upheaval was ultimately to be an open Bible. It was four hundred years previous to this event that Wyckcliffe had translated the Scriptures into the English tongue and had said to an opponent in public controversy, "If God spare my life, I will cause that every plough-boy know the Scriptures better than thou knowest it." Yet in France the Bible was chained to the high altar and the search-warrant which the Lord Himself had put into the hands of the people—Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life—was of no avail. France was yet to learn that God's Word is the franchise of civil and ecclesiastical freedom and, by the same token, the guarantee of national

perpetuity. The corollary of the French Revolution is the French Republic, in which the right of every man to search the Scriptures for himself is fully recognized. The glory of this concession is yet to come in the flooding of the nation with heavenly light.

III. The fall of the Bastille was an effective blow for the enfranchisement of the individual conscience. Michelet calls the Bastille "The prison of thought." The Church itself, as France knew the Church in those days, was largely responsible for the condition of things. It was the logical reaction from ecclesiastical tyranny when a courtesan was enthroned in Notre Dame as the Goddess of Reason. No God, no Church, no Religion! Such was the Revolution from a long-continued system of clerical repression. All must be coerced into the "Church's" way of thinking. Oh! what an array of martyrs would pass before us if all those could be marshalled who have suffered from that holy sophism. Quakers, Anabaptists, Covenanters, Huguenots and Romanists too. Aye, for there have been Catholic as well as Protestant martyrs. The legend of the French Revolution was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" But there is another legend for our banners, to wit: Toleration! And toleration means not that men shall surrender their individual convictions, but that being firm in their way of thinking, they shall be willing that all others shall be equally firm in thinking another way. There are bigots in every denomination of believers, as Thomas Moore says,

"For mad as Christians used to be,  
About the thirteenth century;  
There's lots of Christians to be had  
In this the nineteenth, just as mad."

The spirit of Christ will never prevail on earth until we recognize the fact that loyalty to truth does not mean the repression of error by physical force. Would that all might believe as we do ; but they have the right, so far as we are concerned, to believe as they please.

IV. As we look backward over the long series of bloody events in French history, we cannot but perceive that truth is indestructible ; for notwithstanding the tremendous efforts made century after century to destroy the Huguenots, they still live. To-day the descendants of those who were slain in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, scattered among the towns and villages of rural France, are stretching out their hands and pleading that God's people shall come over and help them. They are indeed a feeble folk like the conies. In many cases they worship within the ruined walls of old Huguenot sanctuaries. There are not many mighty, not many noble among them. They are without wealth or influence. But the passion for truth is strong within them and they long for the privileges of worship and are an hungered for the Word of God.

The sad story of the Huguenots should inspire within us a profounder love for the Gospel with its glorious franchise of truth and freedom. Let us believe in the ultimate triumph of justice. Let us be true to our own convictions ; steadfast, and yet generous ; eager to propagate the Gospel, yet kind and tolerant toward those who blindly reject it ; and above all things, now and ever, let us have faith in God.

## THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God : but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the works of this law.”—DEUT. xxix. 29.

The pulpit is no place for dreams and speculations. It deals with the great verities on which rests the assurance of the endless life. Ours is a utilitarian age. It has been said truly, “The age of apologetics has gone by ; the day of dynamics has come.” No truth is worthy of serious consideration which cannot be brought to bear upon the duties and responsibilities of common life. It seems incredible that such questions as “How many of the spirits of the just can stand on the point of a cambric needle?” were ever seriously discussed. Yet that very question engaged the minds of the scholastics in protracted controversy. We have no time nor disposition for such problems now. Life is too serious. Time flies too fast.

The doctrine of election has been the theme of much unprofitable discussion. The fallen angels in *Paradise Lost* are represented as bewildered in the mazes of

“Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute.”

But this doctrine in common with all others has substantial value by reason of its bearing on the duties

and responsibilities of daily life. It is in this light that we desire to consider it. Let us, therefore, proceed to indicate certain points, with reference to this doctrine, which may be regarded as reasonably certified and of practical importance.

I. *Election is a fact.* It follows as a logical sequence from the belief in a personal God : for a God without the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence is unthinkable. To say, however, that all things were eternally in the divine mind and under the divine control is to formulate the very doctrine now before us. Moreover it is buttressed by the continuous testimony of Holy Writ. As where it is said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"—"chosen you from the foundation of the world"—"elect according to the foreknowledge of God." "And we know that all things work together for good to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Still further, this doctrine is sustained by the universal evangelical consensus. You will find it in the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession, the Thirty-nine Articles, and indeed, in the symbols of the universal Church. We are accustomed to draw a line between Calvinism and Arminianism, as if the former accepted while the latter rejected this doctrine. In fact, however, both alike accept the doctrine, but view it from different standpoints. Arminians say, God foreknew and then predestinated ; while Calvinists say, God predestinated and then foreknew.

But practically here is a distinction without a difference, for to the divine mind there can be no chronological sequence. There is neither "before" nor "after" with Him whose lifetime is an eternal now. Foreknowledge involves the absolute certainty of the thing foreknown, equally with predestination.

II. *Election is a mystery.* God would not be God if we could understand him. It is his glory to conceal a matter. All nature is full of mysteries. A grain of sand, a drop of water, a grass blade, present problems beyond the reach of the profoundest science or philosophy. We do not reject a fact in nature because we cannot understand it. Why, then, under like conditions, should we reject a fact in the province of spiritual things? Nay, rather should it not be supposed that in the realm of the unseen and eternal mystery would be more abundant than within the narrow circle which we can reach with our finger tips? If a man were to betake himself to the East River to fish for whales with a pinhook, we should know him instantly to be a daft Jamie. But what of the man who undertakes, with the resources at the command of a finite mind, to fathom the unsearchable depths of the mind of God?

III. *The doctrine of election rests upon the divine sovereignty.* Only God is great. Who art thou that repliest against him? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? The prophet Jeremiah, bewildered in these same premises, went down to the potter's house and saw him working a vessel upon the wheels, and the work that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again as it seemed good unto him. Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah

saying, "O house of Israel, can I not do with thee even as this potter? Behold as the clay is in the potter's hands so are ye in mine." We may resent this statement of the truth, but we cannot disbelieve it. God is an absolute sovereign. Our breath is in our nostrils and our wisdom is, in comparison with his, as the glow of a fire-fly to the resplendence of the noonday sun. It is for him to say whether he will make an accounting of himself to us. In the last reduction we know him by his name, "I am that I am!"

IV. *This doctrine is not incompatible with the sovereignty of the human will.* If God is sovereign there is also a real sense in which man may be said to be sovereign too. He was made in the divine likeness and the similitude rests largely in the independence of his will. All other creatures are in bondage under law. The ox grazes where God bids it. The sun goes forth out of his chamber to run his race without deviation along the orbit which God has marked for it. The sea obeys his voice, "Thus far and no farther." Man alone can listen to the divine command and say, "I will not!" By virtue of the divineness within him he can resist God and disobey his holy will. It pleased God in making man after his own likeness to put it beyond his power to compel him. Wherefore he says, "Come now, let us reason together." And the Son of God laments, "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings and ye would not." Our freedom is a simple matter of personal consciousness. I propose to lift my hand or drop it. But before doing so let me reflect a moment: no doubt it is settled in the divine mind already, and indeed has been

from all eternity, just what I am about to do with this hand ; yet I am absolutely positive that I can do precisely what I please with it. Shakespeare says, " Our bodies are our gardens, to which our wills are gardeners ; so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry—why, the power and incorrigible authority of this lies in our wills."

V. *As to the nexus or mode of reconciliation between the divine sovereignty and free will. Where is it?* We plead ignorance. The truth is paradoxical, yet both ends of the paradox are true. There is no contradiction between them ; I know that God is sovereign, I know that man is free. My inability to dovetail these complementary facts need not prevent my believing them. A railway train is speeding from the west towards the sea-board at the rate of sixty miles an hour. Not knowing how the locomotive is joined to the loaded cars, I call to the engineer to stop and let me see. If he were to answer, it would be in some such way as this, "I cannot ; business is too pressing. We are moving the wheat crop of the Dakotas eastward to feed the hunger of the world. There's a coupler here, but I cannot stop the train to show it." God is saving the world. He is using two factors in doing it,—his own sovereignty and man's consent. I cannot see the coupler. I only know that omnipotence goes on before and free will follows after, and that they work together toward a glorious consummation. So history is being made and the world is being restored to God.

VI. *The eternal decrees are founded in absolute justice.*



Election does not mean arbitrary choice. God is no respecter of persons. Shall not the Lord of all the earth do right? There is a reason in the discrimination made between the elect and the non-elect; and that reason does not rest in any moral difference in the souls affected by it. More than that we cannot say, because God is silent. It needs scarcely be said that the infinite God has a right to be silent. At this moment we are criticising one of our local magistrates for what appears to be a maladministration of justice. The case stands thus: two culprits were brought before him charged with homicide; one of these culprits is now breaking stones in Sing Sing, the other has gone scot free; at the trial the evidence seemed to be equally weighty against them. The magistrate says only for himself that he had good grounds for discriminating between them and he promises in due time to let the public know. Meanwhile we wisely suspend judgment. In like manner the Lord has declined thus far to disclose the reason for his seeming partiality in choosing some to eternal life and passing others by. We may not like his silence in this matter, but we shall probably agree, that we are entitled to nothing more than a definite assurance, which he has given us, of absolute justice in the matter. It may be that sometime we shall know the rationale of the decrees. He may or he may never reveal it.

VII. *The divine decree has filled heaven with saints redeemed.* There are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands in yonder world of light not one of whom went thither on account of personal merit, but all through sovereign grace. The glory is all ascribed to God.

“ While all their hearts and all their songs  
 Join to admire the feast,  
 Each of them cries, with thankful tongue,  
 Lord, why was I a guest ?  
 Why was I made to hear thy voice,  
 And enter while there's room,  
 While thousands make a wretched choice  
 And rather starve than come ? ”

All of these were born not of the will of flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.

“ 'Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
 That sweetly drew us in ;  
 Else we had still refused to taste,  
 And perished in our sin . ”

VIII. *While this decree has filled heaven with redeemed, it has kept none out.* In all the realms of outer darkness there is not a single soul which can ascribe its sorrow to aught but self-will. There was a time when a portion of God's people held to what is known as the “Decree of Reprobation,” *i.e.*, that God predestinated certain ones to be damned. This is a libel pure and simple. God foreordained sin—and nothing else—to hell. He foreordained unrighteousness to the fire that can never be quenched ; but if the sinner goes out into eternal shame and remorse it is his own doing. The sincere lament of the Holy One is, “Thou hast destroyed thyself !”

IX. *We find, therefore, in this doctrine no excuse for inaction.* Let us be as rational in spiritual matters as we are in the common things of life. The farmer who goes forth to sow his fields knows that in the divine mind it has been predetermined whether there shall be a harvest or not. Yet he knows that

he is free to sow the seed and he proceeds to sow it. Suppose that an invalid, presuming upon the fact that his life or death is a matter of certainty to the divine mind, were to refuse the medicines prescribed for his cure—we should pronounce him a fool and prepare the crape for his door. But in common affairs men do not act in that way. We are perfectly well aware that while all events as well as our eternal destiny have been divinely foreknown and predetermined, yet our wills are quite free and everything in the final outcome depends upon us. We know moreover that in the spiritual province one thing is settled, for God has distinctly announced it, to wit: If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved ; and if not, we shall never enter into life. The part of a wise man is to act accordingly. “Strive to enter in !”

X. *There is great encouragement in this doctrine to such as are inclined to seek their own eternal weal.* We are not left to our own weakness. “Work out your own salvation” is the exhortation, “for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” Is it not inspiring to realize that in every good impulse and resolution we are reinforced by omnipotence? “If God be for us, who shall be against us?”

We, therefore, ministering in his name, declare to you again a free gospel. “Ho, every one !” This gospel is buttressed by an oath and an invitation. “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that all should turn and live.” “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athrist, come. And whosoever will, let him

take of the water of life freely." I exhort you, therefore, to "make your calling and election sure." This is to be done by a frank acceptance of Jesus Christ and life-long faithfulness in following him. Are we questioning whether or no our names are written in the book of life? It is the Lamb's Book. If we have a personal interest in the atoning work of Christ as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, our names are there. If not, not. And over the gateway of the New Jerusalem is written this legend, "There shall in no wise enter here anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

## WHY WE LOVE THE CHURCH OF GOD.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord,"—  
PSALM CXXII. 1.

This Psalm is entitled : "David professeth his love for the Church." And how he did love it ! A wanderer among the mountains, he mourned for his privileges : "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me : for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday." All Israel loved the sanctuary in their exile, they hanged their harps upon the willows and wept, remembering Zion : "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." We are much afraid of excessive devotion to the Church in these days, as if, somehow, our Lord were disparaged thereby ; but indeed there is no danger. The bridegroom is not jealous of his bride. We please Him when we sing

" I love thy Church, O God ;  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And graven on Thy hand."

I. We have reason to love the Church *because it is the peculiar abode of the Lord.*" This will appear in many of its titles, as, The Church of God, the Abode of Christ, the City of the Living God, the Holy Hill, God's Building, God's Husbandry, the Household of God, the Mountain of the Lord of Hosts, a City not Forsaken, the Lord's Portion, the Spiritual House, Place of God's Throne, the Temple of the Living God. It is true that the Infinite One dwelleth not in temples made with hands; that is to say, His presence is not exclusively there, and yet He has promised to manifest Himself there in a peculiar manner. Indeed, the supreme importance and significance of the Church is due to this fact; it is Beth-el, the house of God. Its history could be written in a series of Theophanies or divine appearances.

First Chapter: "And Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect unto his offering" (Gen. iii. 4). "And Abel obtained witness that he was righteous: God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. xi. 4). The blood streaming over the altar testifies to the coming of Christ, and the voice from heaven assures the worshipper of the divine presence and approval; God is there and that to bless him.

Second Chapter: "The Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. xii. 1). In obedience to that voice the patriarch went forth with his household, journeying along the banks of the great river, heeding the divine guidance, and building altars wherever he went. How jealously the angels must have guarded his tent, for within its fluttering curtains was the seed and promise of the

universal Church. The altars which the patriarch built, as he passed on, were memorials of his faith in the coming Christ and the voice gave constant assurance that God was with him.

Third Chapter : "And Jacob dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood above it and said, Behold, I am with thee. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep and said, Surely the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it not. And he called the name of that place Beth-el. And he reared a pillar and said, This stone shall be the house of God" (Gen. xxviii. 12, 16, 19, 22).

Fourth Chapter : "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Let the children of Israel make me a sanctuary ; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 1, 8). This was under the shadow of the flaming mountain at the giving of the law, and the tabernacle which was then constructed was after the pattern which God had showed Moses in the mount. Its plans and specifications were all divine. Its posts and curtains, rings and staves, spoons and dishes, knops and flowers, candlesticks and snuffers, were all made after the divine pattern. The importance of this simple fabric is shown by the fact that it occupies more space in the sacred narrative than does the creation of the world. It was "a little spot enclosed by grace out of the world's great wilderness." At its doorway stood the brazen altar with blood streaming over it and within its Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, above which rose the Shekinah or luminous cloud which was the perpetual token of God's presence.

Fifth Chapter : "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt, that Solomon began to build the house of the Lord " (I. Kings vi. 1). This was the house "exceeding magnificent." It was reared without the sound of hammer or of axe.

"No workman's steel, no ponderous axes swung ;  
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."

One hundred and eighty-five thousand workmen were employed upon this magnificent edifice, and it was seven years in building. As in the tabernacle, its architecture, with all its buildings, were after a divine pattern. It was not finished, however, until the Ark of the Covenant was brought into it. The king sat in solemn state at its dedication, the great altar smoked with sacrifice, the Levites drew near with the sacred symbol of the holy Presence, chanting, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory enter in !" Then the cloudy Presence, the Shekinah, filled the house so that the priests were not able to minister by reason of it. "The Lord is in his holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before him."

Chapter Six : A thousand years after the dedication of Solomon's Temple the disciples of Christ were come together in an open court in Jerusalem and were praying there. Strange things had happened ; the Christ had come, had lived and labored and suffered and died upon the cross. At the moment of His death, when He cried "It is finished !" the priest who was ministering in the temple on Mt. Moriah saw the veil that hung before the Holy of Holies rent from the top to the bottom as by an invisible hand.



The old economy, with its types and shadows, now passed away. The time had come for the rearing of a new and more glorious fabric on the old foundations, to wit, the Church of Jesus Christ. And while the disciples were praying in that open court in Jerusalem, "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts ii. 2). Thus the Holy Ghost came upon them, and amid the wonders of that pentecostal occasion the Christian Church had its birth. In the simplicity of its ritual were gathered up the sum and substance of all the elaborate ceremonial of the old Jewish Church. All purifications were briefly set forth in baptism; all sacrifices in the Lord's Supper, which memorializes the death of Him who was sacrificed once for all.

The Seventh Chapter of ecclesiastical history is yet to be written, and the old dreamer on Patmos outlined it in prophetic vision, when, looking through the open windows above, he saw the New Jerusalem—gates of pearl and streets of gold and sea of glass and multitudinous worshippers whose voice was as the sound of many waters. And the dreamer writes, "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 2, 3).

II. Still further we love the Church *because it is the rendezvous of saints*. Thither the tribes go up.

At the time of the great annual festivals, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, the thoroughfares in

every direction were thronged with the multitudes who journeyed to Jerusalem to worship God. They came from every part of the Holy Land. There was Asshur from the Northwest with the sheaf upon his banner ; there was Benjamin from beyond the Cedron, and Dan from the head waters of the Lebanon, and Ephraim waving his standard whereon were the horns of a unicorn ; there was Gad from the fords of Jericho, and Zebulon from the lake region. and Napthali, the hind let loose ; all these had their tribal quarrels and bickerings and marched under their own peculiar standards, but as they neared the Holy City and the sacred edifice, they folded all their banners and bowed together in the worship of their God. In like manner the Christian Church is divided into its various denominations, but we are all one under the aegis of a common devotion. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.

It was not only for worship, however, that the tribes were accustomed to seek the Holy Place. In times of great danger from the heathen round about or from foreign incursion, they fled thither for refuge. Jerusalem was almost impregnable. The mountains round about were natural fortifications, and the city itself, builded compact together, was like a mighty citadel. Zion is ever the defense of God's people. We may be weak in ourselves, but O what strength there is in the mutual prayers and sympathies of the great fellowship ! What inspiration in the thought that we, who are individually so weak and fallible, are held up in the mighty volume of universal supplication. No right-living man, who aspires after character, can afford to forego this privilege of co-opera-

tive help. There are those who suppose that the Church is an association of persons who profess to be good ; but, indeed, we are in the Church not because we are ourselves perfect, as though we lacked nothing, but on account of our conscious infirmity. We know that we cannot stand alone ; we need the fellowship. In Celsus's famous assault upon the Church in his controversy with Origen, he said: " You are a company of profligates, of avowed sinners, of publicans and harlots. Did not your Master say, I am come not to call the righteous but sinners ? " And Origen answered: " Aye, the Master did say, I am come not to call the righteous but sinners—to REPENTANCE." That is, to the abandonment of sin, to a brave struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the building up of character, to the life which is hid with Christ in God. We have the assurance of our Lord that being in this goodly fellowship and trusting wholly to His sustaining strength in answer to prayer, we shall be held as in the hollow of His hand and no man shall pluck us out of it. Here is the secret of the perseverance of the saints. God is in the midst of Zion and her citadel is impregnable. The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

III. A still further reason for our devotion to the Church is *because it is the seat of spiritual power*. The arm of the Lord is made bare in Zion for the deliverance of the world from sin.

The two great pillars of the Church, like Jachin and Boaz, which upheld the porch of the temple, are Truth and Righteousness. (1) The Church is the depository of truth. Where else have the great doctrines been formulated ? We believe in a personal God. We believe in immortality, and life and im-

mortality are brought to light in the Gospel of Christ. We believe in the Incarnation—the Incarnation has been formulated only in the symbols of the Church. We believe in the Atonement, which is the only rational plan ever devised or suggested for the deliverance of a soul from the shame and penalty and bondage of sin. These are sublime truths touching the solution of problems which reach out into the eternal ages ; and for the formulation of these truths the world is indebted to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of them rest upon the Scriptures, which are her peculiar heritage. “What advantage, then, has the Jew?” says the Apostle Paul. “Much every way ; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” The world is to be saved by the foolishness of preaching, and the centre of all preaching is truth. This is the Archimedean lever which is to lift the world toward Heaven and its fulcrum is the throne of God. (2) The other pillar of the Church is righteousness. Righteousness is obedience to law. The summary of the world’s ethics is in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, and they are the peculiar possession of the Church. These furnish the basis of Christian character, beginning with the pardon of sin through the blood of Jesus. We proceed to “edification,” literally temple-building. When the fabulous Amphion played upon his lyre the stones came from the quarries and assumed their places in the walls of Thebes. It is the work of God’s Spirit to build character by the laying of grace upon grace, until we pardoned sinners shall, under His gracious influence, grow unto the full stature of manhood in Christ.

The sum total of spiritual power is comprehended

in these two, truth and righteousness. If we seek the great energies of nature we shall find them not amid the roar of the tempest or the rumble of the earthquake, but in the silent operation of air and light. By the forces of the atmosphere the mountains are being slowly, surely rent asunder; and the sun sends forth its influence far and wide so that nothing is hid from the heat thereof; it holds the planets in their orbits, swings the tides to and fro and ripens the harvests. Thus truth and righteousness are calmly at work in the spiritual province and are destined, ultimately, to restore the world to God.

If these things are so, it behooves all Christians to be loyal to the Church. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. For my brethren and companion's sake will I now say, Peace be within thee." Is it not an uplifting thought that we are embraced in that great fellowship which, under various names the whole world over, is engaged in the worship and the service of our common Lord? In great cathedrals, in frontier churches by the cross-roads, and under the banyan trees in pagan lands, they are bending at this moment in devotion to Him. O God, enlarge our hearts so that our prayers may embrace them all—all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; all who abide within the confines of the Holy Catholic Church!

And what of those who abide without? Is it not a dreary thing to stand alone in the great struggle? To feel that you have no part nor lot in this great brotherhood, this co-operative guild of prayer and sympathy? The Ancient Mariner speaks of his weary years of wandering thus:

“ O wedding guest ! this soul hath been  
Alone on a wide, wide sea,  
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself  
Scarce seemed there to be.”

But the days of his loneliness are over. He has found the pleasant companionship of God's people and with it strength and comfort unspeakable.

“ O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
'Tis sweeter far to me  
To walk together to the kirk  
With the goodly company !”

The doors of the Church are wide open to all who have accepted our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Friend. We journey to the place whereof the Lord has said, “ I will give it thee.” Come thou with us, friend, and we will do thee good.

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## CHRIST AND THE BIBLE.

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."—JOHN xviii. 37.

What is your idea of God ; that is, of the essential God ? Have you any clear conception of him ? "Canst thou by searching find him out ?" Has any one at any time seen him ? How shall we define him ? The best definition of God is this : "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." But we have merely exchanged one mystery for a bundle of mysteries. For every word of your definition involves a problem.

What then ? Are we to remain in ignorance of God ? No. He has been pleased to reveal himself to us ; as it is written : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ; and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." It is not without deep significance that Christ is thus characterized as the Word. As language is the medium through which we understand one another, so Christ is the articulate speech of God. He is God's Word to men. If we would wish to understand God, we must look on Jesus Christ ; on Christ living, dying and triumphing over death. In him we behold all the divine attributes

and through him we make the acquaintance of God.

Nor is that all. God has revealed himself also in the written Word which is the complement of the incarnate Word. Each of these is theanthropic; that is, divinely begotten but humanly born. To the virgin mother it was said: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Of the Scriptures it is written: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In both cases, whether in flesh or on parchment, it should follow that the Word is absolutely true because it is begotten of God.

This being so, we should expect the Incarnate Word and the written Word to be true to each other. Is the Bible loyal to Christ? Distinctly so. It represents him everywhere in glowing colors, now in the manger, now as a wayfaring man, now with a face marred and defiled with blood and spitting, now resplendent with the heavenly glory, but always beautiful, chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. It nowhere disparages him. It nowhere calls in question his absolute perfection as the only begotten and well-beloved Son of God. Is Christ on the other hand true to the Bible? How does he regard it? What has he to say about it?

We profess to be Christians. That means not simply that we trust in Jesus Christ for our deliverance from the unquenchable fire, but that we follow him implicitly in all things. In every question of truth and conduct his decision is supreme and ultimate for us. If, therefore, we can determine what he thought about the Bible, that will conclusively determine our opinion of it.



At this moment we are discussing the truth of the Scriptures. On one side a small minority, for whom eminent scholarship in these premises is claimed, insist that the Bible is not trustworthy ; that it is a mingled tissue of truth and falsehood ; that considerable sections of it are purely fabulous ; that whole books are downright forgeries ; and that not one book of the entire canon of Old Testament Scriptures can be relied upon as absolutely true. On the other hand, a great majority of God's people hold what is called the traditional view, to wit : that when God produced the original autograph of the Scriptures through his chosen writers, it was true *ipsissima verba* ; that in the transcription of many centuries a few wholly unimportant and insignificant errors have crept in ; but that the Scriptures as we have them in the received version can be absolutely trusted in all points, scientific, philosophic and historic, as well as in matters pertaining to the spiritual life.

How shall we pass upon the merits of this controversy ? For those who profess to be Christians the way is clear. If we can discover what the Lord Jesus Christ thought of the Bible and said about it, that must determine our view. As followers of Jesus Christ we must go not to any syndicate of so-called "Biblical experts," but to our Master himself as ultimate authority in this matter. When he speaks the controversy ends for all who love and follow him.

But there are those, strange to say, who are unwilling to concede this. They say "Christ had his limitations." It is granted that our Lord, in subjecting himself to the conditions of our earthly life, was pleased to lay aside the full exercise of his divine powers ; he held his omniscience in abeyance and also

his omnipotence and omnipresence, but at any given moment he could summon these at will. His limitations were not such, however, as to expose him to the liability of error or to the danger of uttering an untruth. To assert this would be to say a monstrous thing, for it would reduce our divine Teacher to the level of Plato, Mohammed and Joseph Smith. It is manifest that this position is not possible to any follower of Christ. One of the fathers of modern Unitarianism was indeed pleased to say on a certain occasion, when reminded of a divine statement, "I am not willing to receive that upon the authority of any such person as God." It is related, also, that in a recent meeting of evangelical ministers the question being asked, "If Moses did not write the Pentateuch, why did Jesus Christ say that he did?" a voice replied: "Because he did not know any better." It is to be hoped that such an assertion will find no echo among such as sincerely profess to be the disciples of Christ.

As if to anticipate the current objection to his testimony, on the ground of his human limitations, it was asserted by our Lord that God the Father was himself responsible for all his teaching. He said: "I can do nothing of myself"; and again: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me"; and again: "I speak not of myself, but the Father who sent me hath given me a commandment what I shall say"; and again: "The things which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak"; and again: "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." So that to question the teaching of the Lord Jesus, with respect to the Scriptures, is not merely to doubt the statement of one who

was under human conditions, but it is to call in question the veracity of the living God.

Let us proceed now to an enquiry as to the attitude of Christ toward the written Word of God.

I. *He knew it.* He was thoroughly familiar with it. He had learned it memoriter at his mother's knee and in the rabbinical schools. At twelve years of age he was able to discuss with the religious teachers of Israel, from their standpoint in the Jewish oracles, the great problems of the endless life. At the beginning of his ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth he opened the book at the prophecy of Isaiah and strangely enough at a passage which the destructive critics have refused to assign to Isaiah, and read: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." In his discourses he quoted generously from the Old Testament; from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, Micah, Joel, Zechariah, and Malachi. His memory was saturated with it.

II. *He revered the Bible as the Word of God.* We are told nowadays that in order to arrive at an impartial judgment as to the meaning and truth of the Scriptures, we must needs dispossess ourselves of all prejudgments respecting their divineness and regard them simply as a book among books. But Jesus was obviously not of this opinion. It will probably be conceded in most quarters that he was himself a

"Biblical expert"; yet he seems never to have dispossessed himself of the idea that the Scriptures were wholly trustworthy and wholly from God. To his mind the Book appeared to stand alone and peerless. He was not unfamiliar with rabbinical literature; he knew about the Talmud with its interminable disquisitions on truth and morals; he knew the Mishna and the Gemara; but he never put these upon the same level with the Scriptures. How vigorously he denounced the traditions of the elders. How his "But I say unto you" went crashing through the foolish fables and prescripts with which the elders had overlaid the Word of God! But never a word against the Scriptures. So far as we can determine, he held the "traditional view" of their trustworthiness. He spoke of them not as "containing" truth, but as being truth; not as "containing" the Word, but as being the Word of God.

III. *He stood voucher for the Truth of its most difficult parts.* It is a strange coincidence, if nothing more, that in his discourses he touched reverently upon those very portions of Scripture which are most vigorously assailed in these days.

As to the Pentateuch, he not only endorsed its trustworthiness, but repeatedly referred its authorship to Moses. As where he asked, "Did not Moses give you the Law?" And with respect to Deuteronomy, which the destructive critics have pronounced to be a substantial forgery, he placed a peculiar sanction upon it. In his temptation in the wilderness he repelled the adversary on each occasion by a reference to Deuteronomy: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; "It is written,

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"; "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." A critic of the modern school has recently said, "The Bible is no better than a mass book for stopping a bullet, nor as good as holy water for putting out a fire." But our divine Master made the book of Deuteronomy an effective shield against the missiles of the adversary and put out the fierce fires of temptation with waters from "Siloa's brook that flows fast by the oracles of God."

As to the science of the Scriptures, our Lord endorsed the cosmogony of Moses and those early records upon which rest the ethnology and philology of our time. The assault upon the science of the Scriptures is by no means recent. Julian the apostate in his time undertook to cast reproach upon it. But while the theories of "science falsely so-called" have passed through kaleidoscopic changes along the path of the centuries, the Bible holds its own. And when such scientists as Dana, Guyot and Faraday assert its substantial truth, we do not feel called upon to withdraw our faith in it.

As to the history of the Old Testament, our Lord put his distinct sanction upon it and the recent researches of archæologists have furnished a cumulative confirmation of its truth. Prof. Sayce says that no less than seventy-seven events in Assyrian History, as given in Scripture, have been corroborated by recent excavations. In any case, however, the important fact is that Jesus Christ never called these historic annals in question, but positively, as well as tacitly, put his endorsement upon them.

As to prophecy. The pastor of one of our evangelical churches has said, "I know of no one passage in

the Prophets which can certainly be said to point to an event beyond the near future of the writer." If so, then Jesus was certainly mistaken when he said, "Moses wrote of me"; and again, "These are they which testify of me." He found the Old Testament full of predictions respecting himself and his redemptive work, and of predictions pointing to history still in the remote future, to the events of the last days.

As to those particular parts of the record which have been most bitterly assailed by the modern school of critics, it should be enough to mention our Lord's reference to and implied endorsement of the story of Adam and Eve, Abel, Noah and the Flood, Abraham, the destruction of Sodom, Lot's wife, Jacob's ladder, Moses and the burning bush, the manna, the brazen serpent, David, Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, Elijah raising the widow's son, Elisha and Naaman, and Jonah. As to the story of Jonah in the whale's belly our Lord adventured the truth of his entire ministry upon it. The Jews clamored for a sign; he said, "There shall no sign be given, but the sign of Jonas the prophet; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Yet we are told that this story of Jonah is a fable pure and simple, no more trustworthy than that of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp. To what an ignoble climax does this bring the confident challenge of Christ; as if he had said, "As sure as Aladdin wrought wonders by rubbing his lamp, so surely shall I bring life and immortality to light!"

At this point, having observed our Lord's calm acceptance of the truth of the old oracles with never

a word of depreciation or of adverse reflection upon them in any way, it will be profitable to mark some of the statements made by leaders of the Higher Criticism with respect to the same book.\* We begin with Kuenen, who may be regarded as the foremost among them. He says, with reference to the whole Bible, "In the eyes of the writers everything was subordinate to their object, so that they often sacrificed what we consider very important interests to it, historical truth, for example. As a rule they concerned themselves very little with the question whether what they narrated really happened so or not. This is why the Old and New Testaments are so full of legends." As to the history of the Patriarchs, "This legend was invented by the writer himself." "We no longer accept his statements as true." As to the Flood, "We cannot give any high position to this legend." "The Exodus, the wandering, the passage of the Jordan, and the settlement in Canaan, as they are described in the Hexateuch, are simply impossible"; "The representation of all this in the Hexateuch is absurd"; "The representation of the Mosaic times and of the settlement in Canaan which the Hexateuch gives us is, as a whole, contradicted by veritable history."

Knappert: "The Old Testament is rich in legends and myths. We may take as examples the stories of the first human pair, the Fall, Cain and Abel, the Deluge, the tower of Babel, God's appearance to Abraham, and Jacob's wrestling. These stories have no historical foundation whatever"; "When a prophet or priest related something about bygone times

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\* Selected from Prof. Howard Osgood's—"If one love me, he will keep my word."

he never hesitated to modify what he knew of the past, and he did not think twice about touching it up from his own imagination, simply that it might be more conducive to the end he had in view and chime in better with his opinion. Our own notions of honor and good faith would never permit this."

Wellhausen's "History of Israel": "The historical sphere created by itself is nowhere to be found within actual history. Thus it holds itself in the air by its own waistband"; "The dislocation of the narrative by monstrous growths of legislative matter is not to be imputed to the editor; it is the work of the unedited Priest Code, and is certainly intolerable"; "Lifeless itself, it has driven the life out of Moses and out of the people, nay, out of the very Deity." "It is full of historical fictions"; "the audacity of its numbers is not proportioned to their trustworthiness"; "all confidence in it is lost"; "it is hard to give an idea of its pedantry," "its incredible insipidity"; all these characteristics are shown in Genesis where it reveals "its horrid scheming," "its insipid contemplation of nature."

Dillman: The Hexateuch is not "an authentic picture of the legislation of Moses." "Where the author had no historical accounts he sketches freely an imaginary picture, *e.g.*, Noah's ark, course of the Flood, tabernacle (after the manner of a movable holy tent, richly furnished), the order of the camp and march, the determination of the boundaries of the tribes by lot under Joshua, the numbers of each tribe in Moses' day, the quantity of manna that fell, etc." "These are not to be taken historically."

Reuss' "History of the Old Testament": The Exodus, "A bald fiction is the tabernacle, the camp



and the arranged parade march in the desert, the large numbers of the pretended census, and many other things that exceed by far the old sagas, and are really not sagas of the early days but dreams of an impoverished generation."

Holzinger's "Introduction to Hexateuch": "The most numerous and worst possibilities in the Hexateuch are from the sagas"; "the whole chronology of the earliest history is worthless"; "its name-lists are bare-faced inventions"; it abounds in "gross, sheer, mechanically enlarged miracles"; "its historical presuppositions of the giving of the law are whimsies that force a smile"; "the old idea of inspiration is impossible with this hypothesis."

Smend's "History of Old Testament Religion": "It seems almost a silly trick when the author of the Priest Code makes the Sabbath a duty because God rested on that day"; "prophetic inspiration, in the Hebrew idea, did not mean anything peculiar"; "the Israelites received the Sabbath from the Canaanites"; "the representation of the Pentateuch proves itself not historical"; "the lawgiver of the Pentateuch certainly was not Moses"; "a heathen myth is the substance of Genesis i., a product of Babylonian science"; "the life of Abraham is unthinkable and false"; "there was no covenant of God with Abraham. That was the invention of a later age and dated back."

Piepenbring's "Theology of the Old Testament": "The Priest Code, the heart of the Pentateuch, is legend, myth, saga, tradition, and not trustworthy, a proved historical fiction, bald, transparent fiction, artifice, fantasy, false history, whimsies that force a smile, absurd, impossible, contradictory and incon-

ceivable, unthinkable and false, a bare-faced invention."

Riehm's "Introduction to Old Testament": "Not only did the authors of the Pentateuch compose the speeches of the actors, as freely as Thucydides or Livy, but they also gave themselves to more or less free reconstruction of the popular tradition"; "Either this history must have been given to the narrators by revelation, or by historical archives in addition to the popular saga. Neither is the fact"; "Their peculiar character makes on the unprejudiced mind the clear impression that they are not history but saga."

In commenting upon an imposing array of such statements from the leaders of the Higher Criticism, Prof. Osgood wisely says, "*It is not possible on any theory to avoid the real issue. If this criticism (i.e., the Higher Criticism) is true, Christ was the greatest of false prophets and deceivers. If Christ taught God's truth, this criticism is absolutely false.*"

IV. *Our Lord made use of the Scriptures in his personal life.* He lived by them. In hours of weariness, of stern struggle and suffering in the wilderness, in his missionary journeys, and in the anguish of the cross, he drank from them as from a brook by the way.

And he commended these Scriptures to us for practical use. He said: "Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and these are they which testify of me." (1) Search them. How shall we search them? If we are desirous of knowing the full meaning of a penitent's tear, we would scarcely proceed by making a chemical analysis of it. If we wish to understand the song of a sky-lark, we do not

dissect its throat, but watch it when it rises from the meadow on a dewy morning and listen while it pours out its melodious soul on its upward way. To understand the brain of Milton we do not ask an anatomist to tell us of its gray matter and phosphorus, but we listen to the poet as, in *Paradise Lost*, he tells of visions seen through heaven's open gates. Search the Scriptures, in like manner, reverently as if for hid treasure. (2) And apply them ; for in them we rightly think we have eternal life. Here is our salvation in the story of the cross. Here, also, is the material for our sanctification. The old-fashioned Book is a quarry of unhewn stone waiting to be cut and laid in the splendid fabric of character. "Sanctify them by thy truth," prayed Jesus for his disciples and added, "Thy word is truth." Here, also, is our commission for service. The Scriptures are our sealed orders where each for himself must read what the Master would have him do for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God.

I offer, not without reluctance, a page from my personal history with which to close this earnest word in behalf of the blessed Book. One of the earliest memories of my boyhood is of a dear father whose faith was for many years reposed in Paine's "Age of Reason." One winter's day as I stood beside my mother's knee, he entered the room with that book in his hand and, throwing it into the fire, said simply, "Wife, there's an end of it." That night he took down the old family Bible and gathered his sons and daughters about him for prayer. His last years were spent in simple faith in the veracity of God's Word. On my leaving home to attend school his last injunction was, "Be true to the Good Book." Long

afterward, when I was summoned by telegraph to come and pray with him in his last illness, on entering the room, I said : " Father, it's too bad that an old man should suffer so at the last." He answered, " My son, bring the Book " ; and I brought it, and by his direction read from the eighth chapter of Romans until I came to the place where it is written : " I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." There he bade me pause and left that bequest with me. In memory, not only of that venerable saint, but of ten thousand times ten thousand who like him have " known their Bibles true," who have found them trustworthy in their pains and troubles, and a staff to lean upon in the valley of the shadow, nay, more in reverence of the great Teacher who alway believed it, devoutly preached it, and never in word or syllable, in hint or suggestion, ever disparaged it, I bid you also have confidence in the Scriptures. Be true to the Word of God.

## IS JESUS THE CHRIST ?

“ Art thou he that should come ? or look we for another ? ”—LUKE vii. 19.

The solidarity of the race is approved by a curious agreement among all nations as to certain fundamental facts. One of these is the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve—whether under that name or not, is unimportant—sinless and happy, walking with God in the cool of the day. Then something happens—call it “ The Fall ” or whatever you please—a catastrophe by which man is driven from the Garden and exposed to all the sorrows which attend on sin.

Just here, however, there comes in a universal hope of deliverance. All the false religions, as well as the true, point to a coming One who shall overthrow the adversary and restore the race to its original estate. The Greek told of Soter; the Romans of Hercules, who killed the dragon that watched the apple in the Garden of Hesperides; the Persians of Sosiosh, who was to settle the controversy between Ormuzd the Good, and Ahriman the Black, and so bring ultimate happiness to all; the Hindoos of Vishnu planting his foot upon the serpent’s head; the Egyptians of Osiris going down to Hell to subdue the Evil One.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the Jewish Scriptures are full of this prophecy. No sooner had man fallen than the protevangel came, to-wit: “ The seed

of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head"; a dim prophecy at first, but growing brighter and brighter with each succeeding seer until in Isaiah we behold this deliverer of royal blood and majestic presence, his visage "so marred, more than any man's" and tottering under the burden of the world's sin.

If these prophecies, with all the legends and traditions of the false religions, and all the indistinct but universal Messianic hopes and longings of the soul, were combined into a composite photograph they would make an exact portrait of Jesus the Christ.

At the beginning of the Christian Era there was a wide-spread feeling that the fulness of time had come for the appearing of this expected One. All nations seem to have been on the *qui vive*. The Persian magi were watching the stars. It was at this time that Virgil wrote his famous Eclogue on the birth of a son to the consul Pollio :

"The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,  
Renews its finished course ; Saturnian times  
Roll round again ; and mighty years, begun  
From their first orb, in radiant circles run.  
The base, degenerate, iron offspring ends,  
A golden progeny from heaven descends. . . .  
See laboring Nature calls thee to sustain  
The nodding frame of heaven and earth and main !  
See to their base restored earth, seas, and air,  
And joyful ages from behind in crowding ranks appear."

The general expectancy may be perceived in the fact that at this time there were no less than fifty-eight spurious Messiahs. The claims of all these, however, were quickly dissipated and only Jesus of Nazareth has been left to receive the cumulative homage of succeeding generations as the Christ of God.

John the Baptist was a prisoner in Machaerus, a dreary castle overlooking the Dead Sea. His race was run. He had served as the forerunner of Jesus, saying, "There cometh one after me whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. He shall increase but I shall decrease. Behold the Lamb of God!" In his prison he heard of the discourses of Jesus, how he rejected the Jewish traditions, how he cast aside the fetters of the ceremonial law. He was alone and despondent. "The eye of the caged eagle was dimmed." Was it strange if in this exigency his faith failed him? So he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

The problem of Messiah is the problem of the ages. Jesus is the claimant. Is this Jesus the Christ or not? All earnest souls are interested in this query.

"We walk at high noon, and the bells  
 Call to a thousand oracles,  
 But the sound deafens, and the light  
 Is stronger than our dazzled sight;  
 The letters of the sacred Book  
 Glimmer and swim beneath our look;  
 Still struggles in the Age's breast  
 With deepening agony of quest  
 The old entreaty: 'Art thou he,  
 Or look we for the Christ to be?'"

A weaver who had made an elaborate piece of tapestry hung it, stretched upon the tenter-hooks, in his yard. That night it was stolen. A piece of tapestry was found by the officers which seemed to answer the description, but as the pattern was not unlike that of other fabrics, there must be definite

proof. It was brought to the weaver's yard and there the perforations in the fabric were found to correspond precisely to the tenter-hooks. This was demonstration. In like manner if we place the life and character of Jesus over against all prophecies of Messiah in Scripture, in the sacred books of the false religions, and in the universal longings of the race, we shall find that there is a perfect correspondence point by point. If this shall indeed prove to be the fact, we should feel justified in saying that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the long-looked-for Messiah, the Christ of God.

I. *His birth.* It is everywhere agreed in these legends and prophecies that the Messiah must be God-man. He must be capable of suffering in order that he may deliver the race from the penalty of sin. The thought of suffering is set forth in all sacrifices. Every hope of the Messiah on earth is stained with blood. The Greeks called it *ichor*; a superior kind of blood.

God cannot suffer, for he has "neither body, parts nor passions." The Messiah must, therefore, be man in order that he may be capable of pain. But he must be God, also, to the end that he may suffer enough to atone for all ages and generations of the children of men. This is the basis of Anselm's famous argument, *Cur Deus Homo*. The Messiah must in his nature be like Jacob's Ladder; his humanity resting upon the earth and his divinity taking hold upon the throne of God. At this point Jesus meets the requirement. Of him it had been prophesied, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."



II. *His character.* The One who is to deliver the race from its sin must himself be sinless. But where shall such an One be found? We peer, by the light of Diogenes' lantern, into all human faces in vain. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. Here Jesus of Nazareth is unique. He shows no consciousness of sin, utters no cry of penitence, and betrays no concern for his own salvation. On the other hand he challenges the world to find a joint in the harness of his perfect righteousness. The schoolmen of the Middle Ages discussed at great length the question whether he was "not able to sin or able not to sin"; but they never suggested that he sinned. The judge who delivered him to death brought him out to Gabbatha and said to the people, "I find no fault in him at all." The centurion, who had charge of his execution, was moved to cry, "Verily, this was a righteous man!"

✓ III. *His preaching.* The general feeling was, as the woman of Samaria said, "That the Messiah, when he cometh, would tell us all things." He was to solve the great questions of duty and destiny. The carpenter of Nazareth did this. He touched the great problems of the eternal life with a bold hand. He taught not as the scribes but with authority. He untied knots that had defied all the Athenian schools. The sermons of others die by limitation. Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, their voices have left only a lingering echo. But the discourses of Jesus, his sermon to Nicodemus, his sermon on the mount, his sermon at the well, his sermon in the plain, his sermon in the upper chamber, his sermon on the mount of ascension are still "burning thoughts in breathing words," and they flame around the world. A detach-

ment of Roman soldiers was sent to arrest him as he was once teaching in Solomon's porch. They listened for a time and were amazed and benumbed. On returning without their prisoner, they were asked, "Why have ye not brought him?" A strange answer was this, "Never man spake like this man!"

IV. *His miracles.* These were unlike all other miracles. Not only in their beneficence, but in the fact that they were all symbolical of spiritual truth. The opening of blind eyes set forth the power of Jesus to enable the soul to see spiritual things. The wiping away of the leper's spots was an apologue of the power of the gospel to deliver the soul from the defilement of sin. The healing of the paralytic gave assurance that Jesus could energize the palsied will; and the raising of Lazarus was but a shadow picture of what the Mighty One is ever doing in bringing forth those who are dead in trespasses and sins from the dark sepulchre of an endless despair into newness of life. The messengers whom John the Baptist sent to ask, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" were told to stand aside and see what they should see. Then, after he had wrought wonders before them, he said, "Go, tell John what ye have seen; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

V. *His death.* This is the living centre of the gospel. All prophecies, all mythological legends, all longings call for the vicarious death of the Messiah. Prometheus, chained to the rock with the vulture gnawing at his vitals, cries out, "I must endure this until one of the gods shall come and bear it for me." The penalty of sin is death; as it is written, "The

soul that sinneth it shall die." If the Messiah is to deliver the race from its penalty, he must die for it. So here we witness Jesus staggering up the slope of Calvary under the burden of his cross—a mighty Atlas bearing a world of sin upon him. The infidel Rousseau was forced to pay involuntary tribute to the character of Jesus in this pre-eminent act of self-sacrifice. He says, "Is it possible that this sacred personage should be a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what fitness, in his replies! How great the command over his passions. Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary just man, yet loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes trait by trait the character of Jesus Christ; and the resemblance is so striking, that all the Church Fathers perceived it. What prepossession, what blindness must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion between them! The Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety. Before he had even defined virtue, his country abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his contemporaries, that pure and sublime morality of which he only has given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known amid the most bigoted fanaticism; and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did

honor to the vilest people on earth. *The death of Socrates, peacefully philosophizing among friends, appears the most agreeable that one could wish : while that of Jesus, expiring in agonies, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that one could fear. Socrates, indeed, in receiving the cup of hemlock, blessed the weeping executioner who administered it ; but Jesus, amidst excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, verily, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."*

VI. *His resurrection from the dead.* This, also, appears in the universal foregleam of Messiah. He, who is to deliver the world from death, cannot himself be subject to it. The Holy One must not "see corruption" ; his soul must not be left in sheol. The resurrection of Jesus is God's amen put upon his redemptive work. In this we, who have fellowship with Christ, triumph over death and hell ; as it is written, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. So is brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ !"

VII. *His abiding presence.* The crowning proof of the Messiahship of Jesus lies in the fact that, having finished the work of his ministry, he did not abandon the world to its fate, but took up his abode among us. He organized the Church through which he now administers his redemptive work by the influence of his Spirit, and will continue so to do until the kingdoms

of this world shall become his own. His energetic presence is manifest in three tremendous facts. (1) Regeneration. This is his great miracle which he is performing all the while among us. You and I have seen it many a time—a man taken out of his sin and shame and set upon his feet with new hopes and aspirations, a new man in Christ Jesus. Napoleon expressed his unspeakable wonder at the fact that “This Jesus of Nazareth stretches his hand across the centuries and makes the demand for a human heart and gets it!” It is indeed true. He says, “My son, give me thy heart,” and there is a complete surrender. This is the wonder of regeneration, the blending of a human soul under the power of the personal Christ with the soul of God. (2) Sanctification; that is, the growth of the regenerate soul in character and in the knowledge of truth. This growth is accomplished under the influence of the Spirit in the mere imitation of Christ. I have seen art students sitting under Correggio’s face of Jesus in the cathedral at Cologne copying the beautiful features of that portrait with infinite pains. A similar thing, in a larger sphere, is going on the world over; a great multitude that no man can number are earnestly and prayerfully seeking to be more like Jesus. And the consummation of that effort is Christian character; the master piece of human life. (3) Evangelization. Christ is working through that great living organism which we call The Universal Church, and every day is winning new triumphs to the glory of his Messianic name. This is the “philosophy of history.” The cross of Jesus leads the march of progress. Civilization is but the brighter shining of his face. All things are moving on in a

celestial order toward that golden age in which "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does his successive journeys run."

Thus it appears that the character and work of Jesus of Nazareth meet, at every point, the requirements of the Messianic prophecy. Do we still cry, "Show us a sign"? See yonder the bright angel of progress, whom Milton painted, with torch in hand, the name of the Nazarene upon his brow, ushering in the glory of the latter day! See yonder the great procession, ever increasing in numbers, leading on the triumphal advent with the cry, "Hosanna! hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We speak of "honest doubt." There is such a thing. Doubt is either the painful wavering of a noble nature or the boastful frivolity of a fool. To be in "honest doubt" is to be ever in pain. A man who has questioned seriously whether or not Jesus is the Messiah, will rejoice with great joy over any demonstration of the truth. A reasoning faith will solve the problem. The two Pilgrims on their way to the Celestial City were given over to doubt and despondency in Doubting Castle. They had been beaten by Giant Despair with a crab-tree cudgel. On Saturday about midnight they began to pray and continued in prayer until almost the break of day. The Christian, as one half amazed, brake out into this passionate speech, "What a fool," quoth he, "am I thus to lie in a dungeon when I may as well walk at liberty. I have a key in my bosom that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." Then said Hopeful, "That is good news, my brother; pluck it out of thy bosom and try." And as he turned the

key, the door flew open with ease and Christian and Hopeful both came out. A willingness to believe ; a simple rational faith, not blind credulity, but faith founded on evidence, is the key which will ever open doubting castle. Hast thou been questioning, good friend, as to whether or no this Jesus is the Christ? Pluck the key out of thy bosom and try.

## STUMBLING-BLOCKS.

"Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses will come : but woe unto him, through whom they come ! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."—LUKE xvii. 1, 2.

The word here rendered "offense" is in the original *skandalon*, which we have in our English words scandal and scandalized. Its literal meaning is, a stumbling-block. Our Lord made use of it when reproving Peter for suggesting that the cross was unnecessary. "Get thee behind me, Satan !" he said, "Thou art an offense unto me" ; that is, thou art a stumbling-block in my way. The cross is itself referred to as a *skandalon* ; as where it is written, "We preach Christ crucified ; to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are saved, the wisdom and the power of God." In like manner Christ is spoken of as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And he said of himself, "Blessed are they that are not offended in me."

The application in the present instance, however, is to such as by their life and conduct lay difficulties in the way of those who might otherwise come into the Kingdom of God.

I. *A man may be an offense to himself* ; that is, he may lay stumbling-blocks in his own way. A vicious temper, a prejudice against truth or sound morals, a bad habit of any sort, may be the obstacle to a man's



progress toward the higher life. Thus he may be indeed his own worst enemy. It is of such offenses that the Lord spake when he said, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out ; or if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off ; it were far better for thee to go blind or maimed into life, than with two hands or two eyes to be cast into hell fire." It is recorded of Archbishop Cranmer that when he was tied to the stake and the fagots were kindled, he thrust his right hand into the flame—the hand that had signed his recantation and committed him to falsehood and contempt—saying, "O, thou unworthy hand, thou shalt burn first !" It were well for us all, could we, in like manner, put away our darling sins, for in them is the possibility of spiritual and eternal death.

II. *The professed followers of Christ may offend those who are without the church.* We are a watched people. Our life is likened to the athletic sports of the stadium ; we are compassed about by a great crowd of witnesses. The galleries are full of those who watch our walk and conversation. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that we should live circumspectly lest we, perhaps, inadvertently mislead others.

(1) We may do this by an assumption of "over-much righteousness." There is no true helpfulness in lachrymose piety. It is a serious mistake to give the impression that the Christian life is a monotonous routine of unrelieved cross-bearing. True life is a serious matter to those who, in the fellowship of the gospel, have rightly apprehended it. But on the other hand it is the most delightful thing in all the world to follow Christ. At his right hand are pleasures forevermore. To serve him consistently is

to enter into the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for "binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and laying them on men's shoulders." They made long prayers and ostentatiously paid tithes of their garden herbs. They made the Sabbath intolerable by gratuitous exactions, and they made wry faces at innocent pleasure. Thus they gave offense to others and the woe of the Master was pronounced upon them. A similar charge is made against the Puritans, of whom a witty historian has said, "They suppressed bear-baiting not because the sport troubled the bears, but because the people enjoyed it."

All this is contrary to the spirit of Christ who, at the marriage in Cana, turned the water into wine to indicate that blessed transformation of duty into pleasure which comes to all who have rightly apprehended his teaching and his manner of life. If God is our Father, if Jesus Christ has indeed suffered for our salvation, if by our faith in his atoning work we have really entered into the glory and freedom of the spiritual life, then why shall we not make merry and rejoice in him! Tasks there are and grave duties and responsibilities, but his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

(2) There are those in the church who give offense by their lawless manner of living. It is rumored that there are some, whose names are on the church roll as members in good and regular standing, who do not pay their honest debts; some who are not strictly honest in their business transactions; some whose word cannot be depended upon. My brethren, this ought not so to be.

In the reproof which Nathan addressed to David respecting his awful sin against Uriah and Bathsheba, he said, "By this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." In a similar reproof which Paul addressed to the Roman Christians, he says, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you."

But when all is said with reference to Christian inconsistency, it still remains that the example of right living should not be looked for in Christians, but in Christ himself. We do not set ourselves up as examples. We are but strugglers doing our best, and quite imperfectly, to attain unto a holy life. Back of the church and of all fallible believers stands the Perfect One. He is the Great Exemplar. The reasonable course is not to look askance at imperfect lives, but to look at him in whose life there was no guile.

A large portion of the life of Titian was wasted in copying the works of Bellini, and another in imitating the masterpieces of Giorgione; but at length he gave up the imitative method and went out to study nature—the fields, the mountains, the sunsets, the floating clouds—and thus he made himself immortal. Why should thinking people turn their gaze upon mere mortal patterns, when Christ is ever before them? Christ in whom are all the virtues of

character and all the graces of the higher life. Friend, look to Jesus ; he is the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely.

When Agesilaüs was invited to hear a man who mimicked the nightingale with wondrous art, he replied, "Why should I, when I have heard the nightingale herself?" So the man, who has Christ before him, is without excuse if he persist in copying the questionable life and character of any of his fellow-men.

III. *Those who do not follow Christ are in constant danger of offending his little ones.* So much is said of the inconsistencies of Christians that this side of the matter is in danger of being overlooked. Yet this was the special reference of Christ : "Woe unto the world because of offenses," that is, the offenses which the world is wont to place before the feet of his little ones. The weak, the impressible, the unsophisticated and unsuspecting are here tenderly and graciously referred to as his little ones. He is very jealous of these and will not suffer them to be wronged without avenging them. Such are constantly being led astray by the world, but "Woe unto him by whom the offense cometh. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were thrown into the depths of the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones."

(1) At the time when this admonition was uttered, the infant Church was just beginning to suffer from grievous persecution ; the sword was being drawn from its scabbard, the spark was kindling in the fagots. Thanks be to the influence of Christian civilization the era of persecution has passed by. The unspeakable Turk is left alone to massacre those who refuse

to espouse the Moslem faith. But the pointed finger is still a mighty power on earth. And there are other modes of cruelty no less severe than axe and fagot.

(2) The false teacher has much to answer for. Woe to the infidel who leads the unwary astray. Not long ago a brilliant infidel discussed the question, "Is life worth living?" advancing the proposition that suicide is justifiable under certain conditions. An epidemic of suicide followed. The same man is now engaged in publicly maligning the Scriptures, and a thoughtless multitude of young people are waiting upon him. What an awful power is wielded by such a man!

In the Wirtz Gallery of Horrors at Brussels there is a picture called, "Napoleon's Welcome to Hell," in which the maimed and widowed and orphaned are represented as stretching forth their hands to welcome him into the region of endless pain. If by any mischance in the calculation of the great infidel, there should be a judgment day, what legions of the lost will rise up against him.

But there are others who, without malignity, but in utter thoughtlessness, lend themselves to the work of displacing the foundations of truth; who speak against the Scriptures and against the supernatural in religion and against the atonement of Christ. This is an offense to the weak and the heedless, and woe to him by whom the offense cometh. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were thrown into the depths of the sea.

(3) The offense may, also, be given by silent example. It is not necessary for you to say, my friend,

that you do not believe in God ; simply live as if there were no God and the lesson will be taught. You do not need to say, "I have no faith in prayer or in the Scriptures"; simply let the Bible lie dust-covered upon its shelf and never allow your voice to be heard in supplication ; others will take knowledge of it. You need not join the multitude who are leading Christ to Calvary with shouts of "Crucify him ! crucify him !" hold yourself aloof from the great fellowship who receive him as their Redeemer ; that will give sufficient token of your attitude toward him. In any case your example will be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.

One who would injure his neighbor's garden need not break through and tear up the fragrant plants; let him toss a handful of thistle seed aloft and the wind will do the rest. A man going from his house to his stable on a snowy morning, hears a voice behind him calling, "I'm coming right along, Papa." And looking back he sees his little son lifting his little feet and carefully planting them in his footprints. So they do ; no man liveth unto himself. Our children walk in our footsteps.

A man may be willing to take his own chances in denying truth and living an unholy life, but let him think well that he cannot stand alone ; he is the centre of a coterie ; he is living or dying for others ; his children's children will follow him.

IV. But there is a positive side to all this. If by virtue of the silent, tremendous, self-propagating power of influence we are in constant danger of injuring others, by the same token we may be doing constant good. The same influence which lays the stumbling-block, may stretch forth the helping hand.

And blessed be God there are multitudes of people who unconsciously make their lives a blessing to all.

We have recently been called to mourn the death of Dr. William G. T. Shedd. It was my privilege years ago, as an academy boy on Old Andover Hill, to sit under his preaching and afterward I was his pupil in Union Theological Seminary. It is a pleasure now to recall the kindly influence of this man. He was a representative of the conservative school in theology and always true to his conception of truth. He was "liberal" also in the truest sense of that much-abused word; that is, without surrendering one jot or tittle of his own conviction, he was ready that others, who differed with him, should be as positive and dogmatic as he was himself. And always he was generous and helpful. I shall never forget my last brief conversation with him in which, as an old man to a younger, he spoke in terms of blessing and encouragement. So true always, so gentle and kindly, the world misses such men.

As I passed from the sound of the preacher's voice in the funeral service, I found myself in the presence of Gabriel Max's picture called "The Greeting." A maiden doomed to death for her devotion to Christ stands in the arena. On her left a group of lions sated with flesh lie unconcerned; on her right a ravenous beast, with head bent and eyes aflame, is just issuing from its cage. The galleries are filled with expectant people. At the feet of the young martyr a rose has fallen from above. She stands with her hand upon a pillar, her eyes, to be closed in a moment upon earthly scenes, lifted toward the balcony. They search gratefully for the hand that has dropped this token of kindness at her feet.

God be praised we can all do this. The world is full of such as are ever facing death ; whose temptations seem greater than they can bear, whose burdens are breaking their hearts. We may do them a kindness as we pass on. We may make their burdens lighter. We may make the world better for our walking through it.

That was a great word which the Master spoke : “Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? Ye are the light of the world : let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”



## A SERMON FROM THE GALLOWES.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."—LUKE xxiii. 39-43.

It was on a Friday morning that Jesus was led forth to die. And Friday has been hangman's day as far back as runneth the memory of man. It was a motley company that issued from the Damascus gate. The centurion led the way with two quaternions of soldiers; then Jesus with the malefactors, one on either side; then a few weeping friends; and finally, the mob—the multitude that is ever drawn irresistibly by the weird anguish of an execution. So they came to Calvary and Jesus was nailed to the cross and lifted up between heaven and earth. Then the supernatural darkness—night at high noon, and within that sombre veil the Lord wrought his last miracle. They had bound him fast, but they could not rob him of his power to save. His hands, pierced and bleeding, had not lost their cunning. He reached them forth in that last hour and plucked the penitent reprobate from the quicksands of shame and despair, in which he was sinking fast, and set his feet upon the everlasting rock!

But you "do not believe in death-bed conversions?" No more do I. A man is a coward who will burn out

the candle of his life and fling the snuffed wick upon the altar of God. A man is a coward and deserves no mercy who will spend all his years in sordid toil and selfish pleasure and expect to leap into heaven at the last, with the cry "God, have mercy!" upon his lips. That is a dangerous venture. If I were you I would not try it. But God is sovereign and worketh when and where and how he will. And grace is free. Wesley never wrote a truer couplet than this,

"Betwixt the saddle and the ground,  
Mercy sought, is mercy found."

It has been wisely said that one record of a death-bed conversion is given in the Scriptures, so that none may ever despair; but only one, so that none may ever presume. We may doubt all other death-bed conversions if it pleases us so, but as to this particular one there is no question whatever that the penitent thief was saved.

How do we know this? By incontrovertible evidence. The word of the Master himself: "*Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*" Every word is important here. (a) "*Verily.*" It is not often that the Scriptures give us so definite an assurance as to the destiny of any man. We have a reckless way of assigning people to heaven and hell; but the Scriptures speak in more cautious and general terms. As where it is written: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Even in the case of Judas, who was guilty of the great treason, it is only said that he went "to his own place." The word with respect to this penitent thief, however, is very positive: "Verily I say unto thee." (b) "To-

day thou shalt be with me *in paradise*." This is the only occasion on which Christ uses the word. It means, a garden. This man was in the agonies of death; his eye-balls swollen, his limbs twisted in anguish; the hot blood of fever was running through his veins, the pain of gangrene was burning through his flesh, his lips were parched with a fiery thirst. Paradise! Paradise! A garden of delights, ripple of brooks, rustle of leaves, perfume of flowers, apples, pomegranates, clusters of the vine!

“ Oh happy harbor of God’s saints ;  
 Oh sweet and pleasant soil,  
 In thee no sorrow can be found,  
 Nor grief, nor care, nor toil.  
 No dimly cloud o’ershadows thee,  
 Nor gloom, nor darksome night ;  
 But every soul shines as the sun,  
 For God himself gives light.  
 Thy gardens and thy goodly walks  
 Continually are green,  
 Where grow such sweet and pleasant flowers  
 As nowhere else are seen.”

(c) “*To-day* with me in paradise.” Blessed be God for that word! No purgatory, then. No hundred years of penance to burn out the record of the mis-lived past, and then the open gates. And no “soul-sleeping”—a million years of resting in unconsciousness to awake at the trumpet sound and sweep with the great multitude through the open doors of glory. No. “*To-day*” with Christ. In the morning this man was led out from the Damascus gate wearing at his neck a titulum, “He dies a thief.” No friends to pity him; all saying, “It served him right,” and it did. But, perhaps, there was a home in Jerusalem filled with sorrow for him; where an old

mother sat rocking to and fro, her face in her hands, lamenting "Woe is me for my wayward son. He dies a felon's death to-day." She dared not lift her face and look toward Golgotha, for there was the gallows-tree. Her heart was crushed with unspeakable shame, but filled with love ; love maternal, love unconquerable, love which many waters cannot quench. But, O, had she known ! The garments of her woe would have been laid aside and joy would have brightened her dim eyes, had she heard the Master's words and known their meaning ; for Jesus went before to paradise and stood at the gate of the garden to welcome him, saying, "Enter, my beloved ! Eat and drink abundantly and be forever with thy Lord."

But how was this great salvation wrought ? We think of the salvation of this dying malefactor as a miracle of a most extraordinary sort. It was, however, no more a miracle than any other conversion, for conversion is in all cases supernatural and wrought only by the power of God. We are warranted in saying, (1) that this man was not saved by his morality. If under such conditions, as they say, the past life sweeps before the soul as in an awful panorama, then upon what a record did the gaze of this malefactor rest ; no generous service in the cause of truth and righteousness, but sin and shame revels and robberies, violence and licentiousness ! And alas ! it was now too late to retrieve it. The feet that might have gone about on errands of mercy, were nailed fast. The hands that might have dispensed alms and kindness on every side, were bound to the accursed tree. The eyes that might have looked love and sympathy, were filmed already with the foreshadowing of death.

He could do nothing now to atone for the past. Shall we say then that morality is useless? Oh no. It expresses our gratitude for mercies numberless and brightens the glory of the great reward. But it cannot save: "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." (2) He was not saved by his orthodoxy. A creed was of little moment in that exigency. He was probably unfamiliar with the schools. The propositions of Hillel and Shammai were alike to him. The hour had come when all truth was reduced to its simplest form. So when Archibald Alexander was dying, having been sixty years a preacher and forty years a professor in Princeton, he said, "All that can help me now is the faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Creeds and symbols have their uses, for all truth is precious beyond rubies, but they do not save us. (3) Nor was this man saved by the sacraments. He was not a member of the church "in good and regular standing." He may never have passed the threshold of a synagogue. Here is somewhat for church members to gaze on. Come and see how a man can be saved outside the charmed circle. What then? shall we say the church is useless or the sacraments vain? Oh no; they help us on to right living after the foundations are laid in the new birth, but they cannot save. To trust to them for our deliverance is to lean upon a broken staff, which will pierce through the hand.

How then? By what means was this malefactor enabled to pass so wondrously from Golgotha to glory? There were three steps.

*First*—Repentance. This man was genuinely sorry for his sin. It is one thing to be sorry for sin,

and another to be sorry for having involved one's self in trouble through sin. There is an old saying, "No rogue e'er felt the halter draw with good opinion of the law." But this rogue did. In the very article of death he acknowledged the fairness of his condemnation. To his comrade who reviled Jesus, he said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly." In that word "justly" he betrayed his own respect for the law, and his sorrow for having violated it.

*Second*—Faith. The penitent thief believed in Jesus Christ. He called him Lord under the most adverse conditions. He spoke of his kingdom. The Nazarene was dying a shameful death, but this man saw through the shame and the blood, and perceived that he was a king in disguise. Pilate thought that his judgment had put an utter end to the influence of Jesus. The Sanhedrin no doubt shared in that view. But the thief perceived that, in death, Jesus was but prolonging his days and that the pleasure of Jehovah should yet prosper in his hand. It was little that he asked—remember me—but it was enough to shown that he regarded Jesus as the dispenser of the patronage of the Kingdom. To the chief butler, on leaving prison, Joseph said, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee"; but it is written, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Not so did Jesus treat the modest request of the dying thief, but at once gave him assurance that he should have place with himself in the Kingdom of God.

*Third*—Baptism. These are the three conditions of spiritual life: repent, believe and be baptized. What is baptism? An outward ordinance signifying

the washing of the waters of regeneration. It is an announcement to the world of the putting away of the old man of sin and the putting on of the new life in Christ. It is, therefore, made to be appropriately the initiatory rite of membership in the church. The death-dew on the forehead of the penitent thief was the holy chrism. He was received that day by his open confession into the assembly of the first-born. It was beyond his power to submit himself to the outward rite, but he did the very best he could. To the utmost of his ability he complied with all the conditions which are affixed to the gift of eternal life. And God asks no more of any man.

To this it must be added that the penitent thief devoted his whole life to Christ; and salvation is possible on no other terms; as the Master said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God." He did all that. The life that remained to him on earth was indeed but a single hour, but there are men who live more in an hour than others in three-score years and ten. Of Methuselah it is said, "And he lived nine hundred and sixty and nine years, and he died." That was all. Diamond and charcoal are all one; it is a mere question of carbon. There are men whose lives are like a wagon-load of charcoal; others whose lives, though brief, are crystallized like a solitaire. So the hour of life which remained to the dying thief was so consecrated to divine service in the utterance of a prayer which has come down through the ages that it was indeed a gem worthy to sparkle in the Master's crown. What says Ben Jonson :

“ It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk, doth make man better be ;  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :  
A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May,  
Although it fall and die that night,—  
It was the plant and flower of light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see ;  
And in short measures life may perfect be.”

But after all this man was saved not by aught of his own doing, but by the sovereign grace of God. You have seen the shadows following one another swift along the mountain slopes, and looking upward have said, “The clouds are casting these shadows.” It was not the clouds, however, but the sun behind them. Repentance, faith and open confession are mere conditions. It is the arm of God made bare on Calvary that saves us.

And this divine grace is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The hands that were stretched out upon the cross are stretched out still. And he who suffered there, now enthroned in light and glory inapproachable, is able to save unto the uttermost all that will come unto him. The traditional name of the penitent thief was Dysmas, meaning “the setting sun.” The morning of his life had been spent in pleasure, its noonday in toil, and its afternoon in sin; the night was near. There may be one among those to whom this word shall come, who has grown gray in rebellion against God. He looks backward over a wasted life, lost opportunities, promises unfulfilled, sin upon sin. But in this message from Golgotha



there is another overture of mercy. There is time enough still, but none to lose. For

“... our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still like muffled drums are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.”

Do not wait for the uncertain chances of a death-bed repentance. You may be bereft of reason, or the King of Terrors may come in the twinkling of an eye. Now is the accepted time. God speaks: “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” He is ready to save. The fountain has been opened for all uncleanness.

“The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.”

The three crosses still stand on Golgotha. And he upon the central cross is lifted up for the rise and fall of many; on his left are the impenitent dying for themselves alone; on his right are the penitent dying in Christ. The tropical line dividing between the zones of eternal life and eternal death runs through that central cross. The Saviour is in the midst with his hands stretched out. Your lot must be on the left or right of that eternal line of destiny. It is for you to say where it shall be.

## IN THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."—II. PET. I. 16-18.

The faith of Peter rested in the Messiahship of Christ. He believed in his "power and his coming," and, his prime reason for this belief lay in the marvellous thing which he had witnessed on the mount of Transfiguration. There were those who said that he rested under a delusion ; others, that the event referred to was a cunningly devised fable. His answer was at hand. Let him tell his own story :

"It was at the close of our Lord's journey through Cesarea-Philippi. By the way he had much to say respecting his approaching death. We could not understand it. His death ! We expected him to take his place upon the Messianic throne and rule in splendor as the long-predicted Son of David. But he spoke of suffering many things at the hands of the priests and rabbis and of being put to a shameful death. At length we came to Mount Hermon. It was toward the close of the day, and, weary as we were with journeying, the Master signified that he would go apart for a season. So he climbed the mountain path ; the two sons of Zebedee and myself

following close after at his desire. Far to the west lay the Mediterranean, glorious in the sunset ; and in the distant east the Euphrates ran like a torrent of blood among its mountains and historic ruins. At length we paused, and, wearied with climbing, fell asleep. We were presently awaked by the murmur of voices. The Master was changed ; his coarse blue garments were like ermine, his face was all aflame as the sun shineth in his strength, and two companions were with him whom we knew, as by intuition, to be Moses the great law-giver and Elijah the prophet who had ascended a thousand years before in a chariot of fire. We were awe-struck, amazed. I spoke at length : ‘ Master, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias.’ I knew not what I said. There was no answer. Then came the luminous cloud, the Shekinah which long centuries before had disappeared from above the mercy-seat ; and as it folded us in we were afraid. And there came a voice out of the most excellent glory, ‘ This is my beloved Son ; hear ye him.’ We had fallen upon our faces ; the Master touched us, we arose and looked about us. The glory had faded, the celestial visitants were gone and Jesus stood alone. The years have passed but that scene is fresh in memory, as if it had been but yesterday. This is no fable. We are under no delusion. We saw this foregleam of the great apocalypse when he shall be King over all and blessed forever. We heard the voice from heaven. How can our faith tremble ? We believe in his power. We believe in his coming. We shall see him in his glory in the great day.”

Here is the key to the Transfiguration. It had a double purpose :

I. *It was intended to strengthen Christ for his supreme trial.* He was ever mindful of the redemptive work which he came to accomplish. He lived under the shadow of the cross. And he was of like passions with ourselves ; he dreaded death. The sun scorched him, the cold chilled him. His keen sensibilities were hurt by the abandonment of his friends. He trembled in apprehension of the awful pain of the cross. It was this that moved him to say, when the purple draught was put to his lips in Gethsemane, "O, my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me!" He knew the anguish ; he felt aforetime the piercing of the nails, the fever and the heart-break. He needed strengthening and the Father was mindful of his need. Not for an instant was Jesus left alone. The Father himself was ever near, angels were sent to minister to him, and now the two mighty ones, Moses and Elias, representatives of the Old Economy of Law and Prophecy, were come to encourage him.

The subject of their conversation with him was the "decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." At this juncture all heaven was interested in that event, which, as it was the culmination of all the prophecy and all the symbolic ceremonialism of the Old Economy, was to be thenceforth the centre of universal history. For that great struggle on Golgotha they had come to cheer the divine knight-errant, to bind the girdle of omnipotent patience about his loins. It is not difficult to surmise the substance of what they would say to him. (1) No doubt reference was made to the eternal decree respecting the great sacrifice. Did they put him in remembrance of the council of the ineffable Trinity in which was con-

sidered the desperate need of the human race, when the question was asked, "Whom shall we send to answer this cry for help and who will go for us?" and when he himself, the only begotten of the Father, had answered, "Here am I, send me"? Did Elias put him in remembrance of the unbroken line of prophecy running from the protevangel in paradise to the midnight call of Malachi, respecting himself as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world? Did Moses remind him of the significance of all the rites and symbols of the ceremonial law; the paschal lamb, the turtle dove, the blood upon the brazen altar, the blood upon the posts and curtain of the tabernacle, the blood upon the mercy-seat, the blood everywhere? This was indeed the ultimate event, the great consummation for which the whole creation had been travailing and groaning together until now. (2) No doubt reference was also made in this conference to the fact that the sacrifice of Jesus was the forlorn hope of man. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus deliverance must come, if at all. There was none other name; there was none other way. The voice of the great multitude, who were all under the doom and bondage of sin, would appeal to him with infinite pathos. If his flesh shrank from the awful ordeal, his spirit would grow resolute in view of the tremendous issues at stake. It is said of the good King Theodoric that, as he sat in his palace he saw in the vision the famishing people of Orleans, which was then besieged by the Huns; he saw them stretching out their hands to him, saw their gaunt faces, heard their voices, men, women, little children, all calling to him, "Thou, or we die!" So under the stimulation of this confer-

ence with Moses and Elias, the great knight-errant may have heard the world appealing, "Thou, or we die!" (3) And then, too, the glorious issue was canvassed. It had been prophesied of Messiah "When he should give his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." To the Lord now entering upon his mediatorial anguish the gates of heaven appeared wide open and thronged by the great multitude who, by the power of his atoning blood, should enter in. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands all breaking into song, as they crossed the threshold, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us out of every nation and kindred and tribe; and made us to be kings and priests unto God!" Was it so wonderful that his face was changed while he gazed upon this triumph? Nay; is there not something like this in the experience of the humblest worshipper? Have you not seen the wrinkles vanish from the face of an old father in Israel whose dim eyes were lifted toward the throne? There is a transfigurative power in holy contemplation. As Jesus saw of the fruit of the travail of his soul he was satisfied. The light within, the light of a pure heart and conscience and of an unspeakable peace, shining outwardly, enveloped him until he was indeed clothed with light as with a garment. Thus was he prepared for the great sacrifice. He went down from the mountain ready to be offered and set his face steadfastly toward the cross.

II. *This vision in the Mount of Transfiguration was intended also to prepare the disciples for the grievous trials that awaited them.* A tremendous pressure was to be

put upon their faith. The Christ, in whose Messiahship they now professed to believe, was to be exposed to shame and spitting. They were to see him clothed in ribald purple in the judgment hall and scourged and smitten in the face. They were to see him led forth wearing a crown of thorns and bearing upon his shoulders a shameful cross. Would they then be able to believe in his Messiahship? Or would it appear that the power of evil had overwhelmed him? To this very end they beheld this foregleam of his ultimate glory. And it occurred at the very moment when they most needed it. The sun went down yesterday in a very blaze of splendor; the day, as you remember, was drearily overcast, but the clouds cleared away as evening came, and O, the field of cloth of gold! The glassy sea! The archipelago of rubies and sapphires! The pearly gates rolled backward, then the splendor faded. Slowly the gates closed, the shadows fell and the gloom of night came on. So after the long ministry of Jesus came this sunburst of regal splendor and then the anguish of the cross. But in the midnight of that awful experience when the disciples, huddled in the upper chamber, knew that Jesus yonder on Golgotha was dying on the cross, there were those among them who remembered the Mount of Transfiguration. They could not but believe in his power. Had they not beheld it in the mountain? It was no fable. It was no fond dream. They had seen him with heaven's refulgence all about him. They had heard the voice out of the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son!"

1. We may arrive at a conviction respecting the power of Christ by the logical method. That is, we may satisfy ourselves that no one could work his

miracles or utter such discourses as fell from his lips ; that no one could live his life and exhibit to the world so splendid an illustration of spotless character, unless he were indeed the very Son of God. It was by this process that the council of Nicea, which was called in the year 312 by the Emperor Constantine, was able to determine the great Christological controversy. All manner of heresies had arisen in the church as to the person of Christ. For the adjustment of the controversy delegates were sent from all Christendom, and among them came two from Alexandria in Egypt, who proved to be the most conspicuous figures in the council : the one was Arius, the arch-heretic and father of Arianism, known as Unitarianism in later days ; the other was Athanasius, a mere stripling of twenty-five years, who was the defendant of orthodoxy and the formulator of the creed known by his name, which has ever since served as the Christological symbol of the Church of God. In that famous council the question of the divine power of Jesus was discussed pro and con, and it was formally determined that Jesus was very God of very God no less than very man of very man. We may thoughtfully arrive by a similar process at a like conclusion.

2. But experience is a better teacher than reason. They know the power of Jesus who have felt it. I go down to the sea shore with a scientific friend, who carries with him his marine tables and measuring lines, and as we stand together there in sight and hearing of the majestic deep, he speaks of chemical analysis and great measurements, of miles and fathoms, until I cry, "Be still !" I feel all this ; the roar of the ocean is in my soul, my heart



broadens and expands. I feel its majesty. I know it in my inmost nature. So is it with one who has been under the mighty touch of the only begotten Son of God. His logic is not that of the schools but rather that of the blind man, who, having been healed of his infirmity, replied to the carping Scribes and Pharisees, "I know not who this man Jesus is ; but he came and touched my poor eyes and whereas I was blind now I see." Did you ever experience the power of Christ, my friend? Have you heard his voice? Oh ! hear him but once. Let him lay his cunning finger upon your blindness for but an instant and never more will you doubt his power.

3. Both the logical method and the experimental method receive their confirmation in the voice of God. The word out of the most excellent glory was not for the Chosen Three only. We, also, may go up, into the mount of vision. We, also, may hear the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son." We are all too common-place ; too willing to live down in the mists of the valley. The mount of vision calls us. We may dream dreams and see visions, if we will. We may hear heavenly voices, if we will. We may breathe the mountain air with God, if we will.

But the rhapsody—it enheartens, uplifts, inspires, but passes. "Let us build here three tabenacles," said Peter ; but he wist not what he said. We can not dwell forever in sentimental and tearful contemplation. Life has its dreams and visions but they do not constitute it. We must needs go down out of the mountain. At the foot of Hermon was the demoniac boy foaming at the lips. The sin-stricken world was crying for help. The palm-fronds of far-away Patmos were beckoning to John. The prison-doors at

Babylon were rolling back for Peter. The headsman stood with flashing sword calling to James, "Come, I await thee." Blessed be God for the hours of vision. But their value is in preparing us for the sterner tasks and responsibilities of life.

It was not long after the Transfiguration that the chosen three were assembled with their fellow disciples on the slopes of Olivet. All stood with upturned faces gazing after their ascended Lord. A cloud had received him out of their sight and lo ! two shining ones stood beside them—were they Moses and Elias come again?—who said, "Why stand ye gazing into heaven? He shall so come again as ye have seen him go." Thus, they, who believed in his power, were henceforth to believe in his appearing. He shall so come. Maranatha ! The Lord cometh ! And when we behold him again he will be clothed with a transcendent glory of which that in the mount of vision was but the faintest foregleam. And, blessed be his name, when he cometh we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. His triumph will be our triumph and we shall sit together with him in his throne. Wherefore, beloved, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

## THE INITIATION OF PETER INTO THE MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH.

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”—II. PET. i. 16-18.

It was forty years since Peter had witnessed the Transfiguration of Christ. But that event, with its accessories, had made a lasting impression upon him. The cloud, the face of Jesus resplendent “as the sun shineth in his strength,” and the voice speaking out of “the most excellent glory,” all these were as fresh in his remembrance as if they had happened but yesterday. In the meantime Peter had travelled much, had seen the world and mingled with men, but no occasion had come for changing his mind as to the profound importance of the things which happened on that eventful day.

It seemed to Peter as if that occurrence had been really the beginning of his higher life. He was a mere novice before that; now he was an initiate. That is, indeed, the meaning of the word here rendered “eye-witness.” It is a technical word and has specific reference to the initiation of novices into the mysteries of pagan faiths. All the ancient religions had their exoteric and esoteric aspects; one side for the people, another for the chosen few.

There were the mysteries of Isis; and the mysteries of Eleusis, which were revealed in the depths of the forest or in subterranean chambers amid mystic rites and ceremonies and under inviolable oaths. "Happy is the man," sings Pindar, "who beholds the mysteries below the resounding earth." In the religion of Christ there are indeed no secrets from which the humblest are shut out. The saving truths are plain and simple; "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called 'The way of holiness'; and the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein." Yet simplicity itself is a path to sublimity and profundity. There is no end to the joyous researches of him who is disposed to follow out the simple truths of the gospel to their celestial conclusions. Oh, the riches of this wisdom! Happy is the man that goeth up into the Mount of Transfiguration to learn the mysteries of the gospel of Christ.

I. At the outset is the Mystery of the God-man. Of this it is written, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; the angels desire to look into it." The Ark of the Covenant, being of wood overlaid with gold, was symbolical of the two-fold nature of Christ. On the golden cover of that Ark were two Cherubim with overshadowing wings and eyes cast down, of whom it is written "The angels desire to look into it."

How shall it be possible for a finite mind to grasp this glorious truth? If we were to stand under the open heavens at noon and see the sun diminishing in splendor more and more, shrivelling in its dimensions, descending slowly from its place, until at length it fell before our feet, so that we, stooping to take it in our hands, should find only a glow-worm there,

we should think it an unspeakable wonder. Yet that would be incomparable with the thing that happened when God came down, clothed himself in flesh and dwelt among us. This is indeed a mystery. It is high ; we cannot attain unto it. We place it among the innumerable truths—and they are found in nature as well as in grace—which must be apprehended by faith.

It was only a few days before the Transfiguration that Peter had witnessed his good confession, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To those brave words the Lord had made immediate answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee." The mystery of the God-man is at the very basis of our religion. No question is more important than this, "What think ye of Jesus?" It is an old saying, "The secret of Messiah is the secret of man." We cannot arrive at a solution of the problem by the ordinary processes of reason ; we shall find ourselves baffled if we thus attempt it. But God is ready, by his Spirit, to help any man who desires to know the truth. All spiritual truth is apprehended by faith and faith is the gift of God.

II. Another of the mysteries into which Peter was initiated on the Mount of Transfiguration was the Heart of the Father. The world knows there is a God, but it wants to know what are his nature and attributes? and above all, what is his attitude toward us? In vain do we appeal to nature ; the earth rumbles under our feet, the skies are lurid and the air is vibrant with the voice of thunder ; there are blazing suns and scorching winds, fevers and pesti-

lences. In vain do we appeal to history ; it is the story of five thousand years of wars and rumors of wars, of killing times and cursing times, of Neros and Hildebrands and Timours wading in blood, of axe and fagot, of shame and poverty and suffering, of universal struggle for survival of the fittest, of mobs and anarchy and people eating one another up. If we are ever to know God, he must speak of himself; he must uncover his own heart and tell us in some irrefutable manner that he loves us. And this he has done in the saying which is written, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." So loved !

We say that God has neither body, parts nor passions. We say that God cannot suffer. But could he send forth his only begotten and well-beloved Son to such a fate without the rending of his heart? In those words "He so loved" there is an intimation of something beyond all possibility of human grief. The fathers who gave their sons for the defence of the Union in our Civil War will find it hard to believe that God could give his only begotten and well-beloved to the sure death of Golgotha with a painless complacency. For this Jesus was his only Son, his only begotten and well-beloved, fairer than the children of men.

In a time of famine in Germany a certain family was reduced to the last extremity of want. A neighboring baron had long desired to adopt one of the children. The father and mother concluded that there was no other method of keeping the wolf from the door. At night, when the children were asleep in their beds, they climbed the stairs to determine which one should be given up. They

looked into the face of their eldest ; a noble boy smiling in his sleep and seeing visions and dreaming dreams of the coming days ; they could not give him up. Then they turned to the fair-haired lad with his mother's eyes, merry and mischievous, the life of the household ; they could not give him. Then to the bed where their crippled girl was sleeping, the marks of pain wrinkling her little face ; they could not give her. And then to the cradle where the baby was, the last born, the dimpled cheek that had rested on its mother's breast ; they could not give the baby. So, looking into each other's faces across the crib, they softly said, "Let us rather die together." O, blessed mother love and father love ! But God for our sake gave his only Son. This is the supreme and conclusive revelation of his love. This is the mystery of the Heart of God.

So it is written, "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." And again, "In this was manifest the love of God toward us, because that he sent his only begotten Son to the world that we might live through him." And thus it came about that we are able to comprehend and "to know with all saints, what is the length and breadth and depth and height of the love that passeth knowledge !"

III. Still another of the mysteries that came to Peter that day was the Fountain of truth. The earliest of the patriarchs said : *"Surely there is a vein for the silver and a place for the gold where they find it. Iron is taken out of the earth and brass is molten out of the stone. He setteth an end to darkness and searcheth out to the furthest bound the stones of thick darkness and of the shadow of death. But where shall wisdom be*

*found and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air."* The answer to that query is in the word that was uttered from the most excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him"; which finds an echo in the words of Jesus, "I am the truth."

All spiritual truth rests upon three postulates and these three postulates form the sum and substance of the teaching of Christ. First—God. He taught that God is spirit and that when we pray we should say, "Our Father who art in heaven." Second—The soul. He taught its immortality and responsibility when he propounded that insoluble problem: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Third—The reconciliation of the soul with God. He taught that this could only be effected by the decease which he was to accomplish in behalf of men. On the day when he conversed with Moses and Elias respecting this decease, each of them could recall experiences in their earthly life which was inexplicable without it. Moses might look back over the lapse of fifteen hundred years to the time when he was commanded to raise a serpent upon a pole in the wilderness for the healing of those who had been bitten by the fiery serpents and to say, "He that looketh shall live." He must have known all along



how that was but an object lesson and symbolic prophecy of some great saving power, and now all was explained in this, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, in suffering and death, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Elias, also, could look back over the lapse of nine hundred years to the great controversy on Carmel when the blood of the sacrifice streamed over the sides of Jehovah's altar ; and when he made his calm prayer, "O God, hear and answer by fire ; that the people may know that thou art God !" and when the fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice ; blood and fire ; again a prophetic object lesson as to some tremendous event. All is clear as sunlight now. This Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—an whole burnt offering. His life consumed in our behalf by the fire of retribution which had gone out against us. So God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

IV. And there was still another mystery into which Peter was initiated on that momentous day, to wit, the two worlds—the world visible and the world invisible. How near together they were on the mount of vision. Here are three men still living the earthly life ; yonder are two who, for some hundred of years, had been in glory ; and Christ stands upon the border line between them !

We were taught as children to sing of heaven as a "happy land, far, far away." But heaven is not far away. From the slopes of Hermon to the golden gates is less than a single footstep, less than a moment of time. "No oceans roll between, no immeasurable firmaments." Indeed there is nothing between

but a gossamer veil which the touch of a rude finger may withdraw or the sting of an insect rend. The souls of the departed are nearer than we think. Is "Spiritualism" true then? Nay. Spiritualism, so called, is the *reductio ad absurdum* of a glorious truth. We must believe that the souls of the departed are in better business than tapping tables and hiding away in pine cabinets and talking transcendental nonsense. But behind this folly, as behind all other falsehoods, there is somewhat of truth. Is it not written, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them which are heirs of salvation"? It is true we are not conscious of the time of their approach; and, furthermore, there is no medium of communication between us. It is apparently not God's pleasure that we should communicate with them. But we have abundant reason to believe that they are permitted to minister to us and at any moment they may not be far from us.

What is heaven? We speak sometimes as if we knew, but all our information is based upon descriptions given us in Holy Writ; gates of pearl and golden streets and glassy seas and songs and golden harps. In these, however, we have but the best effort of God to describe to finite beings the glory of an infinite celestial thing. How could he picture heaven to us? Try to describe a printing press or a philosophic truth to an untutored savage. Or try to describe Murillo's picture of the Immaculate Conception to a lad in pinafores. I stood once at the Giant's Causeway holding the hand of a friend who had been blind from his birth. He could hear the roll of the mighty deep and the scream of the seagulls, but, as he said, it was impossible for him to

conceive the scene ; the great basaltic formations, the ocean rolling in against the cliffs a hundred feet below and out again in masses of fleecy foam, the vast stretch of waters, the blue canopy above. "But O," he said, "I feel the sublimity of it!" So we, with all our dreaming and wondering, fall short of any just conception of the glory of the unseen world. A great surprise awaits us, for the half has never been told. But meanwhile it is a joy to realize that its splendors are everywhere about us.

The shadows fell on Hermon and grew deeper as the night wore on. It was toward the early twilight when the Chosen Three with Jesus went down the mountain path. They spoke in low voices, looked upward at the fading stars—and every star must have seemed like a new promise of God—and looked through the interstellar spaces with a new wonder and a new and more glorious faith. No night in heaven ; no farewells ; no breaking up of life's sweet chapters with, "Arise, let us go hence." At the foot of the mountain the paths of these men diverged ; one went to lonely Patmos in the Aegean Sea ; another passed out through the Damascus gate of Jerusalem following the headsman with a gleaming axe ; and the third turned his steps toward Babylon where he was to spend his last years in a prison cell. But they would never forget. They had been initiated into the mysteries ; the vision would linger and the echoes of the heavenly voice would abide with them. We too would go down from the mountain to-day to meet the responsibilities of life, but is not heaven nearer than it was and do not yokes and crosses seem lighter now ? One of these days there will be a closing of the eyes, a fluttering breath and we shall be

there ! The faces that we loved are fading, the voices that say farewell grow fainter and fainter ; but faces that we lost awhile are coming into clearer view and hands that we had longed to clasp are beckoning. We are there ! The cloud, the golden mist, is all around us ; the face "as the sun shineth in his strength " is over us ; and the voice is speaking. "This is my beloved Son." Then the eternal song. We are bowed before his feet, the joy of heaven is in our hearts, and in our voices "Thou art worthy to receive honor, and glory, and power, and dominion for ever and ever ; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us and made us to be kings and priests unto God !"

# THE TAXING UNDER CYRENIUS.

## A Christmas Meditation.

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David :) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”—LUKE II. 1-7.

The December winds were sweeping across the hills when Joseph and Mary set out upon this journey. The distance was about eighty miles. The roads, at all times difficult, were now almost impassable. Yonder the travellers go—a sturdy peasant, staff in hand, leading by the bridle a panniered mule whereon sits the muffled figure of a woman. There were wonderful scenes along the way. At the ford of the Kishon they heard again the song of Deborah: “The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river of Kishon swept them away; that ancient river, the river Kishon. O, my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.” And they passed under the shadow of Gilboa, where the shields of the mighty were wildly cast away and where David uttered his lament for Saul and Jonathan—“They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided! They were swifter than eagles; stronger than lions. How are the mighty fallen, and the

weapons of war perished!" Still further on they came to the heights of Jezreel, where, if it were at evening, they saw the glimmer of the lamps of Gideon's three hundred, and listened to the song that was at once a battle pæan and a prophecy: "Then shall be broken the staff of the oppressor as in the day of Midian; for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with fuel of fire; for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace!" It was probably the fourth day when they came in sight of Bethlehem, and passed the fields where Ruth had followed after the reapers and the pastures where David had watched his flocks. Here at the gate was the well for which the exiled king had longed when he was hunted like a partridge among the mountains, saying, "O for a drink of the water of the well beside the gate of Bethlehem!" They entered and betook themselves to the inn. But there being no room for them—so many of their countrymen having come to Bethlehem upon a like errand with themselves—they found shelter in a stable near by. There in the night the great mystery of life was enacted. The Prince was born, not in a chamber hung with purple tapestries, but in a humble stall. There was no ringing of bells, no crying of heralds to welcome Emmanuel: the fierce winds howled without and earth was all unconscious of the coming of the Mighty One.

It was meet that this event should occur just then. The taxing under Cyrenius marked the fulness of time. It had been prophesied that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from

between his feet, until Shiloh come." The enrolment of Israel under the Roman authority gave token of the final departure of all national power from Israel. The throne of David trembled, the scepter fell ; then Shiloh came.

The taxing here referred to—literally an enrolment or census—has occasioned much controversy. It has been said that Luke was all at sea in his chronology ; that a census of this character was indeed taken under Cyrenius, but that he was governor of the province ten years after the birth of Jesus. It has been shown, however, by comparison with secular annals, that Cyrenius was twice governor ; and that it was during his first administration that he began the taking of this census, which was interrupted by the opposition of the Jews. Thus Scripture vindicates itself. The Bible is a true book. "The heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll and the earth shall be consumed with fervent heat ; but the word of the Lord endureth forever." The opposition of hostile critics has merely served to confirm it.

All things in the divine economy come to pass in the fulness of time. The first child that ever was born on earth was welcomed with the cry, "I have gotten a man from the Lord !" A better rendering of these words seems to be, "I have gotten a man, Jehovah !" It is probable that the mother supposed her child to be that "seed of woman" of whom it had been prophesied that he should bruise the serpent's head. She thought that already the Christ was come for the deliverance of the race from sin. Alas ! like many a fond mother she was to see the utter disappointment of her hope. There must be four thousand years of waiting, of sin and suffering ; a great proces-

sion of souls marching through the ages lock-step, quick-step, into the unbroken night. Men's hearts were to fail them ; and through weary centuries they would cry, "How long, O Lord, how long !" But God is not slack concerning his promises.

"Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill  
He treasures up his bright designs, and works his wonders  
still."

The striking of the hour was marked by this enrolment of Cyrenius. All prophecy of the Christ came to its fulfilment *just then*. The Old Testament is a glowing record of Messianic prophecy. We open its pages at the protevangel and mark the face of the Christ growing brighter and brighter as we pass on ; now the dim figure of "the seed of woman" ; now the royal Son of David ; a little later we mark his visage so marred more than any man's, defiled with shame and spitting ; then he sits upon a throne high and lifted up, the Ancient of Days ; and in the final foregleam of Malachi he is the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams. At this last page we pause wondering and afraid. Dare we turn the leaf ? Will an awful disappointment meet us ? Can it be that through all the centuries we have comforted our hearts with a fallacious hope ? With fear and trembling we turn the last leaf, and, lo ! Emmanuel, God with us !

The timeliness of the birth of Jesus is emphasized by three significant facts :

I. *The world had reached its climacteric of sin.* It is sometimes the case that a disease cannot be successfully treated until it has "come to a head." It is a curious commentary on the utter insufficiency of human culture that the world's sin came to its full development in what is called the Golden Age.



At Rome in this Golden Age of Augustus Cæsar the court and people were steeped in luxury and licentiousness. Virgil was writing his *Eclogues*; Horace was singing his *Odes*; Livy was writing his *Annals*. What feasts there were! What glorious sports in the amphitheatre! At this time Cæsar gave an exhibition in which six hundred gladiators fought hand to hand. And Pompey, not to be out-done, brought five hundred lions into the arena. The women counted their divorces by rings upon their fingers. There were fashionable dames of the Empire who asked for decrees of defamation, that they might mount the stage and exhibit themselves in lascivious dances in honor of the gods. If one would gain a just conception of the corruptness of those times, let him read the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. There is nowhere else in all literature such an indictment against the children of men.

In Greece, Zeuxis and Appelles had frescoed the walls of homes and palaces with infinite skill; and Phidias and Praxiteles had carved statues of such marvellous beauty as to challenge the emulation of later art. Philosophy had done its best. The very summit of earthly culture had been reached. The result may be witnessed in the frescoes and inscriptions taken from the ruins of Pompeii in which were presented such exhibitions of sin and shame as may not even be mentioned in these days. When Vesuvius vomited forth her suffocating clouds of scoria and ashes upon that city, it was but the just expression of the unspeakable wrath of God.

The disease of the race had reached its culmination now. There was no soundness in the body, but from head to foot all was wounds and bruises and

putrefying sores. The time had come for the calling in of the Great Physician. If man's extremity is God's opportunity, then let him make no more tarrying. The whole world is groaning and travailing for him.

II. *The world had reached its consummation of want.* It had been predicted that when the Messiah should come he would be "the desire of all nations"; to that end there must be a complete exposure of the weakness of all other plans of deliverance. This was true at the time of the advent of Christ. The old religions were practically dead; they had lost all power to help or to satisfy the souls of men.

The religion of the Jews had come to be a system of mere form and ceremony. The temple itself was a mere whited sepulchre, fair without but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. The religious teachers wore broad phylacteries and made long prayers on the corners of the streets; but they stood in the doorway of heaven, neither entering in themselves nor suffering others to enter in.

The gods of Rome were impotent. Their altars were forsaken. The people had lost all confidence in them. The priests, as they passed each other in the sanctuaries, smiled in each others faces at the thought of the impositions which they were wont to practice.

The philosophers of Greece could not help or redeem men. By the banks of the Ilyssus flourished the Academy and the Painted-Porch. Platonism was dreaming of the possibility of spiritual things; Stoicism hardening men to endure ill silently; and Epicureanism leading its followers in pursuit of the present good. Of these various forms of philosophy Gibbon says, "All the prevailing systems were by the wise

regarded as equally false, by statesmen as equally necessary, and by the people as equally true." The skepticism of the time found a voice in the bitter word that fell from the lips of Pilate, "What is truth?"

Was there then no eye to pity and no arm to save? Shall the people stretch out their hands in vain for help forever? Is God unmindful of their need? Nay. This is the hour for which the centuries have waited. The great Deliverer comes. On the Judean hills the angels tell the story in their exultant song: "To you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men."

III. The fulness of time of the advent of the Messiah is still further marked by the fact that *the nations had completed their contribution to this great event*. The *titulum* which was hanged on the neck of Jesus, when he bore His cross to Calvary, was written in three languages—Hebrew, Latin and Greek. At that period these were the tongues spoken by the three great nations of the earth.

The Jews were a chosen people. They had been chosen to a specific task, namely, to perpetuate the worship of the one true God and to keep the oracles with their Messianic prophecies and pass them down along the coming ages. It was appropriate that now their sovereignty as a distinct people should pass from them, for they had finished their work.

The Greeks contributed their part in the formulation of a language which should serve as a most valuable vehicle for the expression of religious truth. It is no accident that the New Testament was written in Greek. The philosophic culture of that nation had necessitated the forming of a language which

above all others is adapted to the utterance of spiritual things.

And Rome had conquered the world. The decree of Cyrenius calling for a universal enrolment was an announcement of this fact. All nations had passed under the yoke of the Great Empire. The Cæsars had built roads in all directions for the transporting of their legions to the remotest colonies. These roads were to serve for the propagation of the gospel of Christ. The king's heart is indeed in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water. Could there be a more convincing proof of the divine wisdom than this, that he should so have subsidized the Cæsars in preparation for the coming of the Prince and for the spreading of the gospel of peace, that the highways which they had built for their victorious armies should be paths for those whose feet are beautiful, because they bring glad tidings of salvation?

Thus all things were ready. When the clock struck in heaven it was Cæsar Augustus that gave the signal here below. Then the last of the prophets uttered his voice, "Prepare ye, prepare ye, the way of the coming of God; for there cometh one whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. Behold the Lamb of God!" All prophecy is closed, now history begins; the Son of God is here, the joy of the advent season is ours.

"When Christ was born of Mary free  
In Bethlehem that fair citie,  
Angels sang with mirth and glee,  
'In Excelsis Gloria.'"

Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift. We need him. Souls desire him as the hart panteth after the

water brooks. He came to the world in the fulness of time. He comes at this advent season to us. To-day may be for some soul here the fulness of time. Let us open the gates and admit him, that this Christ may be our Christ forever ; that living with him and dying with him, we may also be glorified together with him.

## THE NEW YEAR.

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage."—Ex. xx. 2.

The children of Israel would probably have been unable to tell how they came to be in abject bondage. It was not a sudden thing. They were not pounced upon by the Egyptians and carried away in chains to the brick kilns. They had come into the land at the invitation of Pharaoh to better their condition. They had come with their baggage-wagons and driving their flocks and herds before them. They had settled in the rich pasture lands of Goshen and so lived happy and content for a while. Then Joseph, their royal patron, died, and in the reigns of succeeding Pharaohs their privileges were taken away one by one and their burdens increased. The pyramids must be built, the Israelites were forced into the service ; they accepted the situation because it seemed hopeless to contend against it. They were driven in gangs to the brick-yards where they toiled under task-masters who wielded whips of scorpions. They were required at length to make their tale of bricks without straw. Life had come to be a weariness. Their backs were sore and bleeding. The manhood was crushed out of them. All through the day they cried, "Would God it were night !" and all

through the sleepless hours of the night they moaned, "Would God it were morning!"

Is not this an apologue of life? We set out years ago with bright dreams and aspirations; as we passed on, the world assumed a more serious aspect; our tasks, our pleasures, our splendid ambitions, which had formerly beckoned us with smiles, now became our task-masters; they took their scourges from behind their backs and lashed us. Now we are groaning under our bondage. We are slaves to the workshop, to social life, to Wall Street, to our ambitions, to old habits and appetites. The fetters are riveted. God help us!

The past is our Egypt and the God-man of Nazareth is our deliverer. To the hall of Pharaoh came Moses demanding "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go." The struggle was short, spirited, and conclusive in its results. It was night when the children of Israel went forth. One by one the lights in the homes of Egypt were quenched, but the lamps of the Hebrews burned on. The mothers were kneading dough, the fathers were packing their bundles; the paschal lambs were slain, the households gathered about the table, the men harnessed for their journey—girdles about their loins, sandals under feet, staves in hand. Up yonder on the lintel of the door was blood; blood that spoke of deliverance; the purchase price of a glorious liberty. The night wore on. It was midnight now when a wail of sorrow was heard. The lights in the palace were kindled; lights in all the homes of the city; weeping and wailing for the first born. It was the signal! The children of Israel passed out through the blood-stained door-ways, along the dimly lighted streets,

through the great gates, into the broad highways—men, women, children, more than two million souls. Out of Egypt they went with their faces toward the wilderness and toward the land flowing with milk and honey that lay beyond it. They looked backward; the old homes were there, the graves of their fathers were there. Farewell, Egypt! Farewell!

The past is our Egypt and Jesus leads us forth.

I. A backward glance. It is the season for reviewing the past. To forget is our Christian privilege—to “forget the things which are behind.” But the old year can never wholly slip from our remembrance.

(1) *Its joys.* The Lord be praised for all the pleasures gone by. But the future holds brighter things in store for us. There are people who find a sad comfort in the remembrance of delights gone by. “A year ago to-day,” they say, “we were sailing down the St. Lawrence among the Thousand Isles”; or, “A year ago to-day we were among the orange groves in Florida.” There is an oriental proverb, “The remembrances of past happiness are the wrinkles of the soul.” To recall the pleasant things gone by at the expense of gladsome hope and courage is indeed to cut the sinews of our strength. It was quaintly said by Thomas Fuller: “Memory is like a purse; if it be overfilled all will drop out of it. Take heed lest the greediness of the appetite of thy memory shall spoil the digestion thereof.” As the years come and go, the experiences of the past gain an illusory brightness through the glamour, and detract from the real



value of present joy. There is a genuine touch of nature in the poet's words :

"I remember, I remember, the house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun came peeping in at morn ;  
He never came a wink too soon, nor brought too long a day,  
But now I often wish the night had borne my breath away."

The Israelites, as they journeyed through the wilderness, were wont in like manner to recall, with fond remembrance, the flesh-pots of Egypt. O ! if we could only sit down again at the table in the humble home as we used to do when the good man came weary from the brick-yard and we partook of the mess of leeks and lentils. But could they have seen beyond the haze that gathered toward the north, lo, on yonder heights were the vineyards of Eschol. Yonder were grapes and pomegranates, and happy homes and fertile fields awaiting them. Cheer up, friend, there are brighter days ahead; the joys of the old year were only earnestings of those that shall be. Press on ! Instead of murmuring for the delights of the former time, reach forth toward the nobler pleasures which shall come to thee through faith in God.

(2) *Its sorrows*. In the old year many a burden was put upon us. There were disappointed hopes, and adversities and bereavements. Some of the dear faces are gone. It is impossible not to remember them now. There is a wonderful pathos in the old song :

"Oft in the stilly night  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Fond memory brings the light  
Of other days around me :  
The smiles, the tears,  
Of bygone years,

The words of love then spoken ;  
The eyes that shone,  
Now dimmed and gone,  
The cheerful hearts now broken !

“ When I remember all  
The friends so linked together,  
I've seen around me fall  
Like leaves in wintry weather,  
I feel like one  
Who treads alone  
Some banquet hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled,  
Whose garlands dead,  
And all but him departed ! ”

For all this there is comfort in the philosophy of Zeno, “It cannot be helped ; let us bear it.” But there is vastly more of comfort in the philosophy of Christ, “No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.” And this, “All things work together for good”—all things ; that is, the joys, the triumphs, the pains, the sorrows, the disappointments, all—“to them that love God.”

The children of Israel took out of Egypt with them the mummy of Joseph. No doubt many a man in the sad experiences of the wilderness journey came into the holy tent where that memorial was kept and bowed down under the hieroglyphics that were written upon the mummy case, and pleaded his case with tears : “O thou God of Joseph ! hast thou forgotten to be gracious ? Shall pain and trouble and hungering be our portion forever ? ” And was there no answer ? Aye ; the still voice that ever speaks to a pleading soul : “This journey brings

thee to the heights of Canaan. All things are for thy good. Thou shalt enter in with bronzed face and sturdy limbs and eyes brightened with noble hopes and purposes; a better man for thy thirst and hungering and weariness." So even in the remembrance of our sorrows we may pluck up courage for coming days.

(3) *Its sins.* A year ago we were making resolutions and, alas! we have broken them. Day after day we found ourselves betrayed into the habits of our former life and bowed down at evening to pray, "Have mercy upon me, O God, for I have sinned." And now again we come to the border line of the years, and the old sins are following hard after us.

So was it with the children of Israel when they came down to Pa-hahiroth and encamped by the sea. Some one heard afar off the rumbling of chariot wheels; then another, shading his eyes, said, "I see the gleam of spear-points and waving banners!" Then the cry was raised, "The hosts of Pharaoh! they pursue us!" Then the terror of weak women and children, a panic throughout the camp. "What shall we do? We are entangled between the mountains and the sea!" What could they do? Nothing. And Moses said, "Stand still and see the salvation of your God!"

Is there nothing like this in our personal experience? Have the old things passed away? Have we so rid ourselves of the Egyptians that they trouble us no more? Alas! the chariots of the host of Pharaoh come clattering after us; pride and worldliness, envies and jealousies, evil appetites and unholy ambitions. Here they come driving furiously. What shall we do? Stand still! Stand still and see

the power of God. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ means not only the wiping out of penalty, but manumission. It is effective all the way from the gates of Egypt to the plains of Canaan. The grip of that blood should hold a man forever. We cannot deliver ourselves, but God is a great deliverer. Let us throw ourselves upon his omnipotence. By faith our weakness is made strength. O God of Almighty Grace, the earth is thine and the sea; roll back the waves and drown our pursuing foes! His help assures the pæan of victory. "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. Who is like unto thee, O God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou hast led forth the people whom thou hast redeemed." The promise that was given to Israel in their terror is ours, also, if we claim it, "As for the Egyptians ye shall see them no more forever." Our sins are gone if faith will have it so—dead as the charioteers whose bodies came floating to the shore of the sea.

II. So much for the past. Now welcome the future. A forward glance. Vast stretches of wilderness, toils and dangers, hot suns and blazing sands, and the mountains beyond.

Let us take with us into the coming year three words of power:

(1) *Character*. It is written of these Israelites that they carried with them none of the leaven of Egypt. If any one partook of leaven during the great feast, from the first until the seventh day, he was cut off from Israel. It was the custom to go about the tents with a lighted lamp searching for leaven in every nook and cranny. Leaven was an emblem of the life of old Egypt,—the worship of Apis and Osiris. In

the Scriptures it is ever a type of sin; so says Paul to the Corinthians, "Purge out the old leaven, for Christ is made a sacrifice for us forever. Let us keep the feast not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Let me exhort you as we cross this border line of time to put away the last remnant of sin; to bring no leaven out of Egypt with you. Pass into the new year free from your bondage. Put off more and more the old man, and put on more and more the virtues of the new man Christ Jesus. By the holy passover of Calvary, by the memory of him who leads us forth out of bondage let us go unencumbered and undefiled into the coming year.

(2) *Kindness*. In this word are embraced all the duties which we owe to our fellow-men. The word itself is most significant; it is cognate with the word "kin." To be kind is to be "kinned"; that is, to follow out the thought of our kinship with all. The Israelites went out of Egypt a surging mob; on entering the wilderness they began their national life. Previously every man had lived for himself; now all were to live for the nation and each for his fellow-men. The beginning of Christianity is in a recognition of the solidarity of the race. We are bound together in Christ as the Elder Brother; all a-kin in him. We enter through his mediatorship into a recognition of the brotherhood of man in the fatherhood of God.

We hear much of "altruism" in these days. The word is new, but the thing itself is old as the gospel of Christ. Christianity is unselfishness. Its supreme expression is in two divine words: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so

unto them," and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The new year will offer countless opportunities of doing good. We shall be called upon to stretch forth the helpful hand, to speak the comforting word, to put the cup of cold water to thirsty lips. And in so doing we shall be realizing the very best of human life. For it is true, as old John Sterling wrote :

" 'Tis worth the wise man's best of life,  
'Tis worth a thousand years of strife,  
If thou canst lessen, but by one,  
The countless ills beneath the sun."

(3) *Piety*. Now abide these three ; character, kindness, piety, but the greatest of all is piety. For in the last reduction the chief end of man is to glorify God. Let us write his name large in the history of the coming year. Have we learned it? Have we apprehended the full significance of it? This is life eternal, to know God. And this is the sum of the Law and the Prophets, To love God and to love our fellow-men.

And now I wish you all a happy New Year. We shall fall short unless we begin aright. To enter upon the future with the sins of the past would be like going down a crowded thoroughfare with a ball and chains upon one's ankle. Let us not so handicap our success in coming days. The cross is here and upon it the Christ is stretching out his hands ready to forgive. His blood cleanseth from all sin.

The rabbis have a legend that on that Passover night, when the Israelites were awaiting a signal for their departure, there was in one of the Jewish homes

a sick girl, who asked her father repeatedly if the blood had been sprinkled on the lintel of the door. Not satisfied with his repeated assurances that the servant had properly attended to it, she begged him for her sake to go and see. He went outside the door and looked and no blood was there. He made haste to bring the basin with the hyssop branch and had just sprinkled the lintel when a shadow fell over him ; he looked upward and, lo ! the destroying angel was passing by. Oh, friends, it would be a great mistake if any of us were to close this year and enter upon the future without having attended to the one thing needful. Let us bend our knees and make one trustful prayer that for Jesus' sake our sins may be blotted out.

Then on into the future with mighty faith in God. No sooner had these fugitives passed through the gates of Egypt, than yonder in the night before them rose the pillar of fire, and all through their journeying it led the way,—a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. If God thus go before us into the future, all is well.

A happy, happy New Year to you all. It means a year of rejoicing in the pardon of sin. A year of earnest endeavor in behalf of others. A year of simple trust in the God and Father of us all. The Lord now bless you and keep you ; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you ; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace.

## THE SUNDAY SALOON.

"I would that they were even cut off which trouble you; for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."—GAL. v. 12.

The Stamp Act went into operation in America on November 1st, 1759. In the City of New York it was proclaimed under the skull and cross-bones instead of the royal arms; and the people paraded the streets carrying a banner on which was inscribed "England's folly and America's ruin." In Boston the event was signalized by the tolling of bells; the flags on the ships in the harbor were at half-mast. In the old West Church a sermon was preached by the Rev. Jonathan Mayhew on this text: "I would that they were even cut off which trouble you; for, brethren, ye have been called to liberty." It was a famous sermon on the right of the colonies to self-government. An eloquent presentation was made of their devotion to motherland; their lavish contribution to her exchequer; the jeopardizing of life in her behalf on the high places of the field. And this was their reward; a betrayal of their simplest rights and most important interests.

The people of New York have recently passed through a political revolution.\* There never was a more enthusiastic mustering of the clans in behalf of

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\* This sermon was preached immediately after the inauguration of municipal magistrates elected on the "Reform Ticket" November 6th, 1894.



municipal regeneration. All sorts and conditions of right-thinking people, Jews and Gentiles, Romanists and Protestants, united under the magic legend, "Reform." The smoke of that conflict has scarcely cleared away when the startling announcement is made that our newly elected Legislature may, at the behest of certain of our municipal magistrates, lend itself to the overturning of the American Sabbath and the concession of increased privilege to the liquor traffic. It is proposed to so amend the existing Excise Laws as to introduce what is called the "Ohio plan"—by which the saloon keeper is to be permitted to carry on his business on the payment of a fee of two hundred and fifty dollars—with "local option" respecting the opening of dram shops on the Lord's Day.

It will be seen that two questions are involved. On the one hand, an increase of the privileges of the dram-shop. At this point there is no difference of opinion among right-thinking people of every class. We are all agreed that the saloon is an unqualified curse. It has done evil and only evil all the days of its life. It is the enemy of man; bloating his face, reddening his eyes, polluting the currents of his blood, befogging his reason, paralyzing his will, and sending him a reeling drunkard out into the endless night. It is the enemy of the home; putting out the fire upon the hearth, emptying the barrel and cruse, changing the loving wife into a shame-faced thing, and sending forth the children in rags and tatters to blush because a drunkard begot them. It is the enemy of the workshop; the prevailing distress among the laborers of the country being in large measure due to the fact that they spend not less than

six hundred millions of dollars every year for strong drink. It is the enemy of the church ; I can preach to prisoners in the Tombs, to men sauntering through the public squares, to the dying in the lucid moments that come during the delirium of fever, but there is one class of people to whom all preaching is love's labor lost, that is, to such as have put "an enemy in their mouth to steal away their brains." It is an enemy of God ; he has been pleased to express himself respecting it in unequivocal terms, pronouncing this condemnation upon the dram-seller, "Cursed be he that putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips" ; and this woe upon his victim, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

But a question of still greater importance is involved, to-wit, that of our national rest-day. It is not proposed to formally legislate against the Sabbath. Our public functionaries are too wise to raise the cry, "Down with the Sabbath !" This was done in the time of the French Revolution when the Lord's Day was erased from the Calendar, only to be restored after the mobs had surged through the streets and the gutters had run with blood. One such experiment will answer for all time. In the present case, however, the attempt to subvert the Sabbath is by indirect means. In certain localities, where the people shall so express themselves, the dram-shops are to be open after the morning hour of divine service. By the grace of the Legislature of New York, the Lord is to be permitted to retain one-half of his Sabbath, while the other shall be turned over to the Prince of Darkness ! And observe this is only when the people of any particular locality shall express themselves in favor of it.

The method is known as "local option." No doubt there are matters of such local importance as that only the communities having interests involved should determine them. But in questions touching the great fundamental facts of our American civilization the voice, which shall ultimately determine, must ever be the voice of the whole people. Ours is a government of the people, for the people, by the people. That is to say, the majority rule. It is apparent then that "local option" in matters of national moment is in direct contravention of the principles of popular sovereignty. There was a time when Brigham Young and the dignitaries of the Mormon Church announced that they proposed to settle the question of plural marriage for themselves, no matter what the general government should say about it. But a detachment of the American Army went out to the Wahsatch mountains and put an end to "local option" there. The institution in question was of such general importance that no single community could pass upon it. And there was a time later on when a portion of our country, lying south of Mason and Dixon's line, in its devotion to a peculiar institution, determined to withdraw from the fellowship of the other states. The entire force of the general government was brought into requisition to put down that rebellion ; and, when at last the four awful years of our Civil War were over, it was settled that "local option," in matters of national interest, has no weight as against the voice of the whole people. There are indeed rights reserved by the several commonwealths under the doctrine of "State Sovereignty," but not of such a character as in any case to antagonize the general interest. It is now respect-

fully submitted that the question of Sabbath rest is one of such universal interest, involving the welfare of all classes but particularly of our workingmen, that it cannot safely be left to the judgment of any locality, and certainly not to the judgment of our great municipal centres. Shall the City of New York, with its eighty per cent. of foreign population, be permitted to say whether our American Sabbath shall live or die? Shall a moral principle of such dimensions be submitted to the "bloody Eighth" Ward? That way lies danger. The people of America alone have a right in the last reduction to determine as to principles and institutions which are essential to the public weal.

I. We, therefore, enter a respectful protest against the proposed enactment *in the name of the American people*. The great majority of the people of this republic, beyond all question, being distinctly Americans, are loyal to the institution known as the American Sabbath. They have never given the slightest intimation to the contrary. They have, times without number, expressed themselves in its favor. The American Sabbath is as distinctively one of our national institutions as universal suffrage or freedom of conscience. When DeTocqueville returned to France from his visit to our country, on being asked which of our institutions seemed to him most characteristic, he answered without hesitation, "The American Sabbath; on that day the hammer lies on the anvil, the fire is banked in the furnace, the workman is resting in his home." This is a true witness. In no other country is the rest-day so generally observed; in no other country is it so made to subserve the interests of all sorts and conditions of men. For

the sake of the Republic we should be jealous in its behalf, and our Legislature should be slow to take any action looking toward its surrender. Aside from the fact that it secures for our Republic the promised blessing of Jehovah, he has ever protected the Sabbath-keeping nations, and visited with his vengeance such as have permitted its desecration. It is connected with the best interests of our nation in many ways.

II. An humble protest against the proposed enactment is made, also, *in the name of the people of this Commonwealth of New York*. We call it the Empire State. It is the most American of all our Commonwealths. No other is so justly proud of its home life. And the American home goes hand in hand with the American Sabbath; the two are inseparably related. The Sabbath is, indeed, the only day on which our workingmen have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with their own households. They go to their shops in the early morning and return at evening so weary that they are glad to betake themselves to tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep. But on the Sabbath they are in the bosom of their families. It is *par excellence* the home-day. The proposed amendment of our Excise Laws would give us, as opposed to this, the Continental Sabbath. You may see it in almost any of the cities of Europe where the men are accustomed to frequent the "spirit stores" and the beer-gardens on the Lord's Day.

A recent necrological report by Prof. Roscher of Leipsic makes mention of this remarkable fact, that in Germany the great majority of female suicides occurs on Sun day, but of male suicides on Monday. And the reason, as he indicates, is plain to see; on

Sunday, while the men are away at the gardens listening to pleasant music and quaffing their beer, the women are left at home and given over in their abandonment to misery and despair ; on Monday, however, the men, recovering from the debauch of the previous day, "loathe themselves and die." This is one of the incidents of that Continental Sabbath which the Legislature of the State of New York is asked to introduce among us.

III. A protest is entered respectfully, also, *in behalf of our city*. The liquor traffic has power enough already. Why should we propose to increase it? Here is the bitter source of all our municipal trouble. When Lord Byron was enlisted in behalf of the freedom of Greece, irritated by the hostility of England to that struggling people, he wrote this :

" The world is a bundle of hay,  
Mankind are the asses who pull ;  
Each pulls in a different way,  
And the greatest of all is John Bull "

The "pull" referred to by the poet has come to be a familiar term among us ; and it has been pretty much monopolized by the rumseller. We have grown weary of his tyranny. Why in the name of common justice should our citizens consent to increase it? At this moment we are talking of the "Larger New York." Let us suppose that Father Knickerbocker were to present his suit to the suburban territory in some such way, as this : "I pray you, let us unite our interests for better or worse, for richer or for poorer, till death shall part us. In my own behalf let me say, I have nine thousand saloons with all their attractions to offer—if drawn up in line they would make a red

lighted street of more than thirty miles. I have an imposing array, also, of gambling halls and dens of infamy. There is no city in the country which makes so large an exhibition of the social evil, and this I am now endeavoring to legalize and localize. I am also doing my utmost to increase the power of the saloons by offering them a more liberal tenure of life and giving them the privilege of carrying on their traffic during the larger portion of every Lord's day." It is safe to say that to such an honest presentation of his claims the answer would be, "Declined with thanks."

IV. An earnest and unhesitating protest is, also, entered *in behalf of the Church*. It is probable that there never was a more concerted movement among the churches in behalf of any public measure than during the recent campaign. It was like the mustering of the tribes of Israel in response to the blast of the silver trumpets and the cry, "To the help of the Lord against the mighty !" We were told that the campaign was for sound morals, for the Ten Commandments, for the sanctity of law ; but if recent signs are to be trusted, we were fooled. If the social evil is to be made legitimate in certain quarters, then we were made coparceners in an assault upon the seventh commandment. If the saloon is to have its privileges increased, then our influence was subsidized for the overthrow of the sixth and eighth commandments. And if the whole or a portion of the Sabbath is to be turned over to the tender mercies of the dramseller, then we were used for the undermining of the fourth commandment. We have often been called, "God's silly people" ; and it would appear that we have, in some measure, earned the

appellation, if indeed the event shall prove that our foes have made it possible to consummate this iniquity.

V. And finally a protest is entered *on behalf of the new administration of this city*. It is rumored that at a time during the recent campaign, when the votes of the so-called German Reform League were in question, one or more of the leading candidates on the Reform Ticket announced themselves in favor of opening the saloons on the Sabbath-day, and that the votes of the brewers and their friends were secured in this manner ; and that it only remains now to deliver the goods. This rumor is not to be believed for a moment, because it is incredible that men of the character referred to should have so compromised their manhood and their loyalty to their truest friends. We take this occasion, therefore, to resent the imputation. It was for an offence such as here suggested that Charles II. was written down as one of the most odious names in history; for while he subscribed himself as a friend to the solemn league and covenant, he was in negotiation for the Scottish throne with the Papal See. Such duplicity as that makes men infamous. If an intimation of the present charge had been made during the campaign, it is safe to say that the churches would have unanimously repudiated the movement in behalf of so-called reform. We shall, therefore, expect our magistrates to purge themselves effectively of this libellous reflection upon their honor. Whoever is behind the present movement of the Legislature in New York, it certainly cannot be the men whom we prayerfully chose to honestly and impartially administer our laws.



The churches have the power to prevent the consummation of this scheme. A vast majority of the people of our Commonwealth believe in God and morality. Let them make their convictions known and felt in time and those who are engineering the present movement will be glad to abandon it. There never was a truer thing said than this of John Foster's, "Power to the last atom is responsibility." If we lose our Sabbath in the city of New York, it will be because the people of the churches are recreant to their solemn trust. Our magistrates are not our masters, but our servants. Let us frankly tell them so. They are chosen not to make new policies with respect to great moral questions, but to execute existing laws without fear or favor. It devolves upon us to see that our influence shall not go for naught. The Master likened our influence to salt, adding, "But if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" In behalf of our country, our Commonwealth and the church let us stand for the right as we understand it. This is our liberty; the glorious liberty of the children of God

## THE WALDENSES.

“The light shineth in darkness.”—JOHN. i. 5.\*

The founder of the Italian Church was the Apostle Paul. As a prisoner in the praetorian camp, he preached for two whole years the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ. The character of his preaching may be determined from his Epistles which have furnished the doctrinal material for the symbols of all the churches of the Reformation. The time came, however, when Paul was led out beyond the walls and executed, and his believing hearers were driven by persecution in all directions. Some of them found a refuge in the valley of Piedmont, at the foot of the Maritime Alps which separate France from Italy.

This valley is only twice as large as Manhattan Island, but it occupies a great place on the map of the world. The Christians who dwelt here were surrounded by picturesque beauty on every side. The mountains round about them were tokens of the watchcare of God. They were secluded like Israel in Palestine, as in a sanctuary. Here they kept the simplicity of their faith. The temptations of luxury and worldliness were unfelt by them. The strifes and controversies of nations were nothing to them.

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\*On the shield of the Waldensian Church is the golden candlestick surmounted by seven stars with the legend, *Lux lucet in tenebris*; i. e., “The light shineth in darkness.”

In their seclusion they kept as a sacred inheritance the faith that had once been delivered to the saints.

It was not for nothing that God had thus enclosed them in a solitary place. They were reserved for a great purpose. These people, who at no time in their history numbered more than thirty thousand, have constituted from time immemorial a missionary church. In the early centuries it was their custom to send forth colporteurs two by two ; a *barba* or presbyter in company with a younger man. These went in all directions carrying packs of merchandise and scattering the truth of the Scriptures wherever they went. The traffic of these Vaudois peddlers is described in one of Whittier's poems, which, rendered into the Italian tongue, is cherished in the Piedmont Valley at this day. The packs being opened and the beautiful fabrics and jewels displayed, the peddler is represented as saying :

“ O, lady fair, these silks of mine  
Are beautiful and rare—  
The richest web of the Indian loom  
Which beauty's self might wear.  
And these pearls are pure and mild to behold,  
And with radiant light they vie ;  
I have brought them with me a weary way:  
Will my gentle lady buy ? ”

The lady purchases and turns away. He speaks and recalls her :

“ O, lady fair, I have yet a gem,  
Which a purer lustre flings  
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown  
On the lofty brow of kings ;  
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,  
Whose virtues shall not decay ;  
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee,  
And a blessing on thy way ! ”

At this point, her curiosity excited, she bids him produce his wonderful treasure :

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,  
As a small and meagre book,  
Unchased with gold or diamond gem,  
From his folding robe he took :  
" Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price—  
May it prove as much to thee !  
Nay, keep thy gold—I ask it not—  
*For the Word of God is free.*"

We are now beginning to see what the divine purpose may have been in preserving this humble community so jealously among the hills. To them is largely committed the work of the evangelization of Italy. There are but seventeen pastors in the Valley itself, but in the regions without they have forty-three missionary pastors, besides fifty-five evangelists. There is an almost continuous line of missionary stations from Torre Pellice, Turin, Milan, Como, Brescia, Venice, Verona, Naples, Rome, Brindisi and other towns and villages down to the remotest end of Sicily. Is it not the very irony of history that this people, persecuted through the centuries by the Papal Church, should now be the chosen instrument of preaching Christ to Italy? If the other branches of the universal Church were as efficient in missionary service, it is safe to say that the conversion of the nations would be near at hand.

In the year 1209 Otho IV. of Germany, on his way to Rome to be consecrated Emperor by Pope Innocent III., gave authority to the Archbishop of Turin to exterminate the Waldenses. This was the beginning of long centuries of fire and blood. In

the heroic history of these people, during this long period of persecution, we find the counterpart of one of the vivid prophecies of the Apocalypse (Rev. xii.). A woman is represented with a child in her arms: she is clothed in the sun with the moon under her feet and wearing a crown of twelve stars. The woman is the Church; the child is—shall we say the Child Jesus or his pure gospel? She is pursued by the red dragon; the dragon of persecution with seven heads and ten horns of power, drawing after him one-third of the stars of heaven. To her are given the wings of an eagle that she may fly into the wilderness where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. And the dragon was wroth with the woman who kept the commandments and testimony of Jesus Christ.

We have in America three anniversaries which we cherish with the most grateful pride: 1620 when the land was first trodden by the feet of those who sought freedom to worship God; 1776 when from the belfry of Independence Hall rang out the message, "All men are created free and equal and with inalienable rights"; and 1863 when Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The Waldenses also have three anniversaries, all of them antedating ours and signaling events of most painful memory:

In 1393 under the authority of Pope Gregory II. an attack was made upon the villages of the Waldensian Valley. All efforts to convert this people through monks *de propaganda fide* had been vain. The bitter methods of inquisitors sent *de extirpandis hereticis* had been equally vain. Then came the Bull of Extermination. On May 22d of that memorable

year the churches were decorated as for some great festivity, but the people of the Valley were silent and in tears. Two hundred and thirty fires were kindled along the highway ; two hundred and thirty of the leading men of the Valley were led forth to be burned at the stake. This was followed by seizures and confiscations and tortures and deaths until, the survivors having fled to the mountains, the Valley was quite solitary. The soldiers, however, were not withdrawn until they were needed over in France to reinforce the strength of Joan of Arc who herself was presently to be burned at Rouen. For those were burning days.

In 1488 there was a new fulmination by Innocent VIII. The Valley was again invaded by armed men. At the first village they paused and strangled eighteen men. The Waldenses, unable to resist an army of twenty times their number, again retreated to the hills driving their flocks and singing Psalms as they went upward. One-third of the way up, six hundred feet above the Valley, there is a cavern called Ailfred with a shelf of rock above it. Here the aged people with the women and children, who were unable to continue the flight, were placed, and provisions for two years were left with them. Cataneo, the captain of the invading army, scaled the mountain and let down men from above with ropes ; these piled fagots against the mouth of the cave and setting fire to them, smoked out the fugitives like mice and slaughtered them. Three thousand perished that day, of whom four hundred were infants. It was a great day's work for the Vicar of God !

In 1535 a general amnesty was proclaimed by Francis I. on condition of abjuration within six months.

Not one of the Waldenses abjured his faith. They were required to attend mass or die ; instead, they retreated to the hills. As the men-at-arms on their pursuit were passing Pra-del-Tor a shower of stones was rained upon them from above with fatal effect and for that a bloody vengeance was exacted. The inquisition was set up. There were tortures unspeakable ; such as could be seized were flayed, burned, shredded with iron whips, hurled from the rocks. At Montalto there were eighty-eight prisoners who filed through the door one by one with linen bandages over their eyes. As they came forth their throats were cut until eighty-eight bleeding trunks lay there in line. Eighty-six were flayed alive ; the bodies of some were cleft in twain and impaled on pikes along the high-road. No less than sixteen hundred suffered death in this persecution.

The heroism of this people and the value of their magnificent struggle for freedom, may be learned from a comparison with persecutions among the greater nations ; in the time of bloody Mary there were two hundred and seventy-seven only who suffered for the faith. Here in the valley of Piedmont there were many who had their eyes and tongues torn out, their entrails dragged forth ; they were cut with sabres and their wounds were salved with quicklime ; their mouths were filled with powder, which was lighted ; their nails were torn off. Does the recital sicken us ? What of the reality ? And the men who wrought these things were greeted with *Te Deums* on their return to Rome !

At length a proclamation was issued by Louis XIV requiring the people to abjure their religion or go forth from the valley. They fled to the mountains

again and kindled the bivouac fires. Popery was triumphant at last. A band of eighty men crept out from their hiding and fought like lions. They were defeated. Their lives were spared on condition that they should go. Wearied by centuries of harrying, the people consented to leave their homes. It was mid-winter when they crossed the Alps, in all two thousand six hundred and fifty-six souls. Many of them died on the way. The survivors found an hospitable welcome and shelter at Geneva and the surrounding country, and here they remained for the brief period of four years. But they were mountaineers and homesick all the time. Then a leader arose among them, Henri Arnaud—"one of the few immortal names which were not born to die." He collected a troop of eight hundred who met secretly in the forest and by the lake shore. One August day, they set out upon the homeward march. They passed the upper lines of the enemy to the bridge of Dora where, after desperate fighting, they pushed their way through. On they went, chanting the seventy-fourth Psalm, and after incidental struggles resumed possession of their former homes.

It was during the latter days of these weary persecutions that Oliver Cromwell wrote a pathetic protest to his majesty the king of France which was delivered by the hand of Sir Samuel Morland and ran in part as follows: "May it please your Most Serene and Royal Highness, I am sent by Prince Oliver, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, unto your royal highness, whom he heartily saluteth, wishing you life, a long reign, and prosperous success in all your affairs. As for myself, though I be a young man, I confess, and have not much experience, yet it pleased



my most serene and gracious master to send me, being one that is much devoted to your royal highness, and a great lover of all of the people of Italy, to negotiate matters of great importance, for so those affairs are to be called, wherein the safety of many poor, distressed people, and all their hope, is comprehended, which indeed consisteth wholly in this, if so be that by all their loyalty, obedience, and most humble petitions, they may be able to mollify and appease the mind of your royal highness, which hath been provoked against them. In behalf of these poor people whose cause even commiseration itself may seem to make the more excusable, the most serene Protector of England is also become an intercessor; and he most earnestly entreateth and beseecheth your royal highness, that you would be pleased to extend your mercy to these your very poor subjects, and most disconsolate outcasts; I mean those, who inhabiting beneath the Alps, and certain valleys under your dominion, are professors of the Protestant religion. For he hath been informed, that part of these most miserable people have been cruelly massacred, part driven by violence, and forced to leave their native habitations; and so, without house or shelter, poor and destitute of all relief, do wander up and down, with their wives and children, in craggy and uninhabited places, and mountains covered with snow. Oh! the smoking homes, the torn limbs, the ground defiled with blood! Some decrepit with age and sickness, have been burnt in their beds. Some infants have been dashed against the rocks, others have had their throats cut, whose brains have, with more than Cyclopean cruelty, been boiled and eaten by the murderers! What need

I mention more, although I could reckon up very many cruelties of the same kind, if I were not astonished at the very thought of them. If all the tyrants of all times and ages were alive again, (which I would speak without any offence to your highness, seeing we believe none of these things were done through any default of yours,) certainly they would be ashamed when they should find that they had contrived nothing, in comparison with these things, that might be reputed sufficiently barbarous and inhuman. In the meantime, the angels are surprised with horror; men are amazed; heaven itself seemeth to be astonished with the cries of dying men; and the very earth to blush, being discolored with the gore blood of so many innocent persons! Do not thou, O thou most high God, do not thou take that revenge, which is due to so great wickedness, and horrible villanies! Let thy blood, O Christ, wash away this blood!"

It was at this period, also, that John Milton, who was the secretary of Oliver Cromwell, wrote those famous lines:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;  
E'en them, who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,  
Forget not: in thy book record their groans,  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow  
An hundred-fold, who having learnt thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe!"

Was it worth the price? Are there adequate results to show for all this outlay of life? And what have we inherited from these lamentable years of persecution?

First, a lesson as to the sanctity of truth. In these days of shallow convictions it is well for us to recall the memory of those heroic men who believed that truth was of more value than comfort, possessions, or life itself. The Waldenses believed in God. They believed in the Bible as the veritable word of God. They believed that doctrine of Justification by Faith which the great father of the Reformation was pleased to call, "The doctrine of a standing or a falling church." "Stand for the truth" was their motto; nor could a better be found for believers then or now. Stand for the truth, for it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir. Stand for your convictions with life, fortune and sacred honor.

Second, a lesson in toleration. We sit comfortable under our vines and fig-trees in these piping times of peace and prate of toleration as if it involved a surrender of truth. "I have my opinions and you have yours; but they are not worth quarreling about. Let us surrender them in the interest of peace." But this is not toleration; it is a cowardly subterfuge. The *rationale* of true religious freedom runs on this wise: "You have your opinions, and I have mine. On either side they are deeply grounded in heart and conscience. Let us both alike cherish our convictions and yet keep the peace; each recognizing that the other has equally with himself a right to his own belief and his own fashion of worshipping God." This is broad and generous "liberalism"; it involves no sacrifice of true manhood or devotion to principle.

This was the sort of freedom for which the Waldenses ever contended. They were at no period disposed to interfere with the ecclesiastical rights of those who differed with them ; all that they claimed—and for this they were willing to pledge their lives—was the liberty of believing and worshipping in their own way.

Third, a lesson as to the perpetuity of the Church. The very existence of the Waldenses is among the greatest miracles of history. The sword could not destroy them ; the fire could not consume them. The prophecy of Christ respecting his Church was fulfilled in them ; “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Fourth and finally, a lesson as to the inestimable value of our religion. It has been purchased for us with a great price. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ himself has been touched by tributary streams of martyr blood all through the ages. A noble army of witnesses passes before us : Huss and Latimer and Savonarola, the Vaudois, the Huguenots, the Covenanters, the Puritans, old men and women and children, their garments all aflame and blood streaming down their faces. These men labored and we have entered into their labors. They suffered, and we inherit the benefit. As they pass by on their way toward the heaven above, they certify to us with a yea and amen beyond all eloquence of spoken words, that the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is true, gloriously true, forever true ! It gives us a religion to live by and to die by. God help us to be faithful in defending and in living it.

## “ BUT GROW.”

“ But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II. PETER iii, 18.

There are three chapters in the “ Ascent of Man,” and after that an eternal sequel. The three chapters are sin, regeneration and life ; the eternal sequel is growth unto a perfect man.

(1) Sin is death. that is, it is a malady whose sure outcome is spiritual and eternal death. “ The soul that sinneth it shall die,” not because God said so—for this is merely a forensic sanction put upon an inevitable law—but because death as the consequence of sin is interwoven with the fibers of the human constitution. Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. It need scarcely be said, however, that death does not mean annihilation. Death never means annihilation. A tree is said to be dead, not because it has ceased to exist, but because it no longer exercises its normal functions, being merely a leafless trunk cumbering the earth. A man is said to be dead, not because he has ceased to be, but because having ears he hears not and having eyes he sees not. In like manner a soul is said to be dead in consequence of this moral malady—because the will and heart and conscience no longer do their proper work, have no practical grasp of invisible and eternal verities, make no response to the appeal of the Spirit of God.

(2) Regeneration marks the important crisis in the history of a soul. It is the arrest and reversal of the process of disease and dissolution. In the operation of physical disease there is a time when a fever comes to a hand-to-hand conflict with all the restorative forces. The "crisis" has come. The physician stands at the bedside, noting all the symptoms, feeling the fluttering pulse, saying at length, "There is no hope"; or else "There is a change for the better." Regeneration is this change for the better in the spiritual province. It occurs when a man, fixing his eyes upon the atoning death of Jesus, receives its power into his life,—this being the only specific for sin. This acceptance of Christ marks the favorable passing of the crisis, for at that instant the work of regeneration is wrought by the Spirit and the soul enters into newness of life.

(3) Life is the unspeakable gift. The Saviour said, "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly"—life, in ever increasing power. This life means not merely the arrest of spiritual disease and dissolution, but the quickening of all the energies of the soul. Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new—new hopes, new purposes, new aspirations. The man is turned right about. He was facing toward the eternal darkness; now he looks with eager eyes toward truth and goodness, and strives with a constantly increasing desire to return to his first estate in the likeness of God.

This is the beginning. Then growth, the eternal sequel. The objective point is character, which is another name for Christlikeness. But observe that

there is no possibility of growth except to such as have entered into life. Life is the prerequisite. I may thrust a dry stick into the ground and foster it with all possible care, giving it access to the sunlight and the dews of the morning, but I shall never have anything but a dry stick ; no growth, no foliage, no fruit, because there was no life. So is the case with many a brave struggler, who, by the frequent making of good resolutions, strives in vain to attain unto the virtues of perfect manhood. Let him begin at the beginning by accepting Christ, so entering into life. When once he begins to live, he must needs begin to grow. This is the word of promise : "I am the vine, ye are the branches ; abide in me and I in you, so shall ye bear much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing."

This growing is the business of the Christian life. The man of our text knew whereof he spoke when he urged this growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. He had been a diamond in the rough ; a fisherman wont to emphasize with an oath his commands amid the storms of Gennesaret ; blunt, headstrong, with much to overcome and much to learn. But as the years passed, he became under the nurture of the Holy Spirit a different man. The thought of moral culture had taken possession of him and found a splendid realization in his own character. It was meet, therefore, that he should dwell upon its importance ; as he does not only here but often elsewhere. For example he says : "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in

you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The figure in Peter's mind is that of infancy advancing to the full stature of a man. The gods of the ancients were born full grown. Minerva is said to have sprung all armed and panoplied from the forehead of Jove. But Christians begin as babes in Christ and advance through certain conditions of normal growth to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

How? Here is the important matter in hand. How do Christians grow to the fulness of character? How do other infants grow? We shall find a perfect analogy at this point. The same conditions hold in the spiritual as in the physical province with respect to the making of a man.

I. The first thing necessary is *food*. The saints' pabulum is the Word of God. Herein is both milk for babes and meat for men.

Christ is the Word; the Incarnate Word. We grow just in the measure in which we partake of him. It is not enough that we should gaze upon his portrait as an objective thing, regarding him as chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely; but we must so apprehend him as to blend his very life with ours. This is the meaning of the Sacrament which is indeed memorial of the great tragedy by which we entered into life. But more than that, it is the type and symbol of the mystical union with him, as it is written: "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." We must so apprehend him as to be able to say, "My Lord, my Saviour, my gracious Intercessor." We must so eat of



his flesh and drink of his blood, as that his will shall become our will, his purposes our purposes, his nod and beck our only law. We must so interchange our very being with his, that we shall be able to declare "I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me."

The Bible, also, is the Word of God. It is the complement of the Incarnate Word in such a manner as that these two, taken together, constitute the complete revelation of God. The prayer of the Master in our behalf was, "Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth." We fall short of our privilege and dwarf our stature, when we satisfy ourselves with a merely critical and objective study of the Scriptures. Men do not sit down at the king's table to analyze the food set before them, but to eat it. So let us approach the Scriptures, not for purposes of critical dissection, but to partake of all their glorious truths to the building up of our spiritual strength and the perfecting of our character. To those who are hungry for moral sustenance its songs are sweet morsels, its promises are as honey dropping from the rock, its precepts and doctrines are milk and meat for the making of bone and sinew. Bible Christians are strong Christians. They sit at a loaded table; all the things spread before them are for the satisfying of their hunger and the building up of their strength, as it is written: "All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

II. *Work*, also, is necessary for growth. Food makes muscle, but work hardens it. For want of this our children become puny and nerveless. Why is it that the decimated ranks of commerce in our

metropolitan cities are supplied from the country? It is because the farmer's boy rises at day-break to feed the stock, while the city boy lies abed until the maid calls him. We languish, also, in the Church by reason of the fact that our new converts do not always find enough to do.

We are told in the Arabian Nights of a certain pasha who was overcome by languor and indisposition. He sent for the court physician, who prescribed for him on this wise: he called for a wooden sphere which he filled with certain drugs; then for a hollow rod in which he placed a decoction of magical herbs; then the rod was fastened into the sphere and the physician said, "Take this, O Pasha! go out into the garden and beat upon the earth with it, until the medicine within shall exude in perspiration and creep into thy flesh and blood." The narrator adds that the patient was perfectly restored. A similar prescription would not be amiss in our churches. And indeed there is no lack of exercise in the economy of God.

Self-conquest is demanded of us. And this means severe effort. "There is a war in our members," says Paul,—the lower nature contending with the higher for the mastery; the old Adam struggling with the new Adam; the passions and appetites of the natural man face to face and eye to eye with the new hopes and ambitions. "Hard pounding, gentlemen," said Wellington to his aides at Waterloo. Hard pounding, indeed, if in this spiritual conflict I keep my body under: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Cross-bearing also calls for strenuous effort. And by cross-bearing we do not mean chastisement ; we shall come to that later on. Cross-bearing is doing for others. The cross is the pre-eminent symbol of altruism. The cross of Jesus represents a voluntary work which he took up in behalf of suffering men. The cross of the Christian is participation with Christ in the great propaganda, in his effort to build up the kingdom of truth and righteousness on earth and so to deliver the race from sin. It was with this intent that our Lord said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." The work of the universal Church is cross-bearing. To do good at the sacrifice of personal preference and convenience. To do good as fishers of men. Oh ! the blessedness of this service ; to grow weary in toil beside the Son of God.

" One more day's work for Jesus,  
How sweet the work has been ;  
To tell the story,  
To show the glory,  
Where Christ's flock enter in.  
Lord, if I may,  
I'll toil another day."

III. *Recreation*, also, is necessary to spiritual growth. It is a proverb in common life, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." The same is true with respect to spiritual life.

The closet is our play-room. Here it is that we refresh ourselves when wearied by sterner tasks. There is danger of excess in such recreation, as among those recluses who exhaust their time in counting their rosaries and contemplating their breviaries; but as a rule in these practical days there is much more

danger of stinting our closet hours. We thus lose the great blessing which the Scotch woman found in "just sittin' alone wi' Jesus an' clackin' wi' him."

The public service of the sanctuary is our playground. Indeed I am not sure that the word "service" in this connection is not a misnomer. The church bell calls us, not to service, but to the pleasures of communion with each other and with God. This is not duty but recreation. Here are the pleasures of friendship and fellowship. We sit together in heavenly places with Christ.

"How pleased and blest was I,  
To hear the people cry :  
Come let us worship God to-day.  
Yes, with a cheerful zeal,  
We'll haste to Zion's hill  
And there our vows and honors pay."

IV. Onè thing more is necessary to our growth, namely, *medicine*. It is a fortunate child that never needs it. In most cases the system at times runs down or disease invades; the physician is called in; then the bitter draft and the wry face. We are asking in these days, "Does God send trouble?" No and yes. There are two kinds of trouble :

(1) Trouble which comes in immediate consequence of sin. The largest portion of our suffering is from the devil. Shame and self-contempt, diseases that come from bad drainage and neglect and disobedience to natural laws, political corruption, dyspepsia, the sorrow of scapegrace children, these are not from God. These are the *sequelae* of sin. We are not warranted, on that account, in saying that God has nothing to do with them. He overrules them for the good of his children, as it is written :

"All things work together for good to them that love God." He is stronger in this matter than the adversary of our souls. It was Paul's repeated prayer that he might be delivered from his thorn in the flesh; the answer came, not in the drawing of the thorn, but in the rich promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

(2) There are many troubles, however, which must be regarded as paternal chastisements. You would not allow your little child to play with a razor; you would take it away, so does God. There are pleasures and earthly possessions which, as we know very well, are like edged tools in our hands. There comes a time when God finds it necessary to take them away. We sob and weep and cry out against it, but our Father knows best. We are his children and He is treating us as such. "Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face." "No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Such chastisements are for our spiritual and eternal good; by them we are strengthened and built up in the most holy faith.

A few remarks now by way of more practical application. *First*: Our growth, or, as it is technically called, sanctification, is distinctly the work of the Holy Ghost. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. We shall make no mistake if we put ourselves trustingly in his care. To resist is to grieve him. Grieve not the Spirit of God. *Second*: Our growth is likely to be gradual. There are some of the lower orders of plants, consisting merely of cellular tissue, which

reach their full maturity in short time. A mushroom has been known to grow in a single night from a mere atom to a plant six inches in diameter—but it was only a mushroom after all. It is said that God's people shall grow "like the cedars of Lebanon." The cedar takes hold with its roots upon the cliff, resists the winds and tempests, fills the air with its balsamic odors, grows on for a thousand years, gnarled and twisted, but the giant of the forest. So is Christian growth; here a little, there a little; but ever more and more toward the strength and fulness of noble character. *Third:* Then the glorious consummation, a man! A man of full stature; a man restored to the image of God. O, this is worth all the pains of earnest growth. When Kepler discovered the law of planetary distances, he exclaimed, "O God! I thank thee that I am permitted to think thy thoughts after thee." This is the glory of manhood; the sublime possibility before us; to share God's thoughts with him, to enter into the fellowship of his holy purposes, to participate in his work and ultimately to sit together with him in his throne. Let this be our prayer: "That we may come unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"; that we may hear him say at last, as of his only begotten and well-beloved One, "Thou, also, art my son"; partaker of the divine nature by kinship with the First-born who is Elder Brother of all.

## THE GLEANING OF THE GRAPES OF EPHRAIM.

"Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?"—JUDGES viii. 2.

It was the day after the battle, and a glorious battle it had been. The three hundred of Abi-ezer had won a glorious victory over the Midianites, who were as grasshoppers for multitude. At dead of night, provided with lamps, pitchers and trumpets, they went down the mountain side into the hostile camp, where each in silence took the place assigned to him. At a given signal the lamps were broken, the lights flashed forth, the trumpets blared and the cry rang out "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The sleepers in their tents awoke, sprang from their couches, bewildered, terrified by the clangor and the flashing lights and fled every man for his life. The three hundred were in hot pursuit, their purpose being to intercept the fugitives at the ford of Jordan. Heralds were sent over to Mount Ephraim to say, "Go down and hold the waters of Beth-barah." The men of Ephraim hastened to the ford and that night there was a great slaughter. When the day broke, the roads were strewn with the dead as far as the old camp at Jezreel. The waters at Beth-barah were red with blood. Oreb and Zeeb, the princes of the Midianites, had been slain. It was

a time for rejoicing, a time to sing "Who is like unto our God ; glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" But there was a fly in the ointment. The men of Ephraim were always captious and overbearing. "Why hast thou dealt with us so?" they demanded of Gideon. "Why were we not called when thou wentest out to battle?" And they chid him sharply. He might have told them they were cowards, brave enough to chase a flying foe but not to be trusted in the high places of the field. He might have told them that they were proud, envious and insubordinate. But he knew that a soft answer turneth away wrath. "What have I done in comparison with you?" he answered. "For God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian. Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?"

The gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim ! This is the portion that falls to us. We are living in a glorious day. Our fathers gathered the vintage with strife and travail and garments rolled in blood. It is for us to stand at the waters of Beth-barah and gather up the fruits of victory. The world is at its very best. If life was ever worth living, it is worth living now. Great is the privilege and correspondingly great is the responsibility of those who are appointed to glean the grapes of Ephraim.

I. *Ours is the golden age of truth.*

(1) The body of truth is larger than that of any former time. We shall probably agree that Aristotle was one of the most learned of the ancients ; but if he were to return to-day, he could scarcely pass a preliminary examination for admission to one of our grammar schools. The results of past re-



search and controversy along the past have accumulated into a great treasury of knowledge. Each generation has contributed its part. One settled the matter of the rotundity of the earth; another gave the law of gravitation; and still another the conservation of force. One gave gunpowder, another steam, and still another electricity. One argued out the doctrine of the Incarnation, another the personality of the Holy Ghost, and still another that of Justification by Faith. These truths have been laid down as postulates upon which to rear a superstructure of other truth. To be sure there are people who insist on going back and demonstrating each for himself these fundamental facts; as if seamstresses should insist on sewing with a fish bone or old-fashioned bodkin; or as if farmers were to plow their fields with a crooked stick. But the great multitude of people in these days are content and glad to profit by the achievements of the past. They believe that a better vision of the great landscape of truth may be had by standing on the shoulders of their forebears. History is not a treadmill wherein men go round and round getting nowhere, "forever learning, yet never coming to a knowledge of the truth." Nay, rather, it is a thoroughfare, the King's highway, whereon we journey like a royal troop, league by league, laden with the spoils of the conquest until we come to the palace of the King.

(2) The great body of truth, thus accumulated, is held in a truer spirit of toleration than the past ever knew. It is only two hundred and fifty years since Galileo, in the papal council, was required to make this statement: "I abjure, curse and detest the heresy of the motion of the earth, and I promise to teach

that the earth is the centre of the universe and an immovable body." After which he rose from his knees and muttered between his teeth, "Nevertheless it does move!" In our time a man is permitted, without molestation, to believe as he pleases respecting such matters. He may hold with Galileo or, if he prefers, with John Jasper of Richmond. In like manner a wise latitude prevails in respect to religious views. In the Continental Congress a motion to open the sessions of that body with prayer, was opposed by the Hon. John Jay on the ground that so many warring sects were represented upon the floor, Quakers, Anabaptists, Presbyterians and others, that if one prayed, the rest could not with patience hear him. Blessed be God, there are no such warring sects to-day. The various denominations of believers may differ as to non-essentials, but they are all agreed as to those great fundamentals of truth which our fathers of Abi-ezer have handed down to us from the conflicts of the past. One volume of prayer goes up from all Christendom in the spirit of a true fellowship,—“one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.”

(3) And along with this spirit of toleration goes a truer orthodoxy than of old. The denominations may differ, and indeed do differ with respect to minor matters, but they are loyal to old landmarks. If you want to find skepticism with reference to these, go back to the time of the primitive Church and hear the Apostles admonishing against Arianism and Gnosticism and Docetism and Ebionism and Neo-Platonism and countless other erratic modes of faith. If you want to find heretics, go back to the Middle Ages, when the Bible was chained to the monastery

pillars, and see the wide-spread revolt of the human intellect against the absolutism of the Church; the days when the lights were out and there was no open vision; when Bulls and Decretals were enforced by scourge and thumb-screw and fagot. If you are in quest of heretics, go back to the time of the Reformation; then, amid the exuberant joy of new-found freedom, all sorts of excesses in infidelity were to be found under the banner of religious emancipation. Or if you are hunting for heretics, go back to the beginning of the present century: the time of Voltaire and Rousseau and the French Encyclopedia; the time of Thomas Paine and the "Age of Reason"; when, at the inauguration of President Dwight, there were only four professing Christians in Yale College; when there was only one professing Christian in Bowdoin College; when Park Street Church was the only orthodox Church in Boston, and so unpopular that the "best people" were accustomed to sit under its ministrations, with mufflers over their faces. Oh no, these are not the days of heresy, but rather of quiet rest on the part of the great majority of believers in the fundamental and proven facts of the Christian system. It is not for nothing that our fathers, in the great struggles of the past, formulated our historic creeds and symbols. We may differ on some things which yet await their final settlement, but the universal Church can stand upon its feet to-day and say with united voice: "I believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, died for us, rose again and shall return to judge the quick and dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of

saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen."

II. *Ours is, also, the Golden Age of morality*, particularly in its larger sense as touching all the relations of man with his fellow-men.

(1) The industrial reform may be cited in evidence. What does it mean that at this moment tens of thousands of workingmen in Brooklyn have struck for higher wages? Such a thing would not have been possible in the days of ancient Rome, when all wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of ten thousand patricians with millions of plebeians and slaves under them, to whom were accorded neither wages nor rights of any sort whatsoever. A strike was never dreamed of then. As late as the time of Charles II., a popular ballad was written, setting forth the complaint of the weavers, who, receiving sixpence a day, pleaded for a shilling. We have gotten far past the time of silent sufferance or even of popular ballads. It is a fact of immense significance that labor and capital, employer and employee, have reached the fighting level ; when face to face and eye to eye they are settling the problem. A ballad calling for a shilling a day ! Nay, not ballads, but ballots for the multitude and bullets in the last reduction. Nay, not a shilling a day now, but ten times as much for the earnest toiler and still a contention for more. Capital has rights for which it tenaciously strives ; labor has rights for which it vigorously contends. Out of this conflict must come the solution : an honest day's wages for an honest day's work ; corporations with souls and laborers with rights. Thus are we hastening on to that

blessed time "when man to man, the whole world o'er shall brothers be an' a' that."

(2) The temperance reform. This was almost unheard of a century ago. In the American Congress of 1789 a duty was placed on glass with a singular reservation; that reservation was in respect to black quart bottles, which were to be admitted free! In 1808 a Temperance Society was organized in Saratoga County, New York, in which forty-three members, all of them substantial farmers, pledged themselves not to drink gin, whiskey or rum under a penalty of twenty-five cents and not to be drunken under a penalty of fifty cents for each offence. We have travelled a great distance since then. Now we hear of total abstinence as the right rule of personal life and of prohibition as the best means of controlling the drink traffic. For this we have to thank the fathers who gathered the vintage of Abi-ezer; who, in the controversies of moral suasion and legislation, wrought out these more salutary methods and passed on their achievements to us.

(3) Political reform. We hear much of "civic corruption" in these days; of bribery and black-mail and the like. In the time of William III., bribery was so commonly practised that the king publicly announced his inability to dispense with it, saying, "Under the existing order of things, to refuse the common practice would endanger the crown." The municipal corruption which is so arousing the popular indignation at this moment would have been made little of in former days. It is a good sign—this stirring about the Augean stables. It is a glorious sign this clamoring for the sovereignty of the people. We want no monarchy now, no oligarchy now, but true

democracy. The people can be trusted. We write it large, King People! Men and potentates are reduced to the ranks. God and the people are controlling things. Nay, God through the people. *Vox populi vox Dei.*

(4) Sociological problems. All branches of the Christian Church are concerned in the discussion of questions which touch the welfare of the community ; the betterment of home and society ; the care of the poor, the aged and all incapables. At the beginning of the Christian Era there was a place down by the Sheep Market in Jerusalem, where the lame and the halt and the withered were laid to await the moving of the waters ; this was the best hospital of the time. On the other side of Gennesaret, in the land of the Gadarenes, a poor demoniac had his dwelling among the tombs ; that was the best sanitarium for the insane of that time. At the Gate Beautiful, a paralytic asked an alms of Peter and John as they passed by ; that was the best asylum for the poor of those days. But all along the line of Christian history, there have sprung up institutions for the relief of the poor and the suffering, and to-day we are clamoring for more hospitals, more sanitariums and more asylums. The *liberalitas* of the ancient world has given way to the *caritas* of our religion. We are beginning to understand the song of the angels, not merely in its ascription of glory to God, but also in its expression of good will toward men.

(5) As to personal character. We make more of character and less of adventitious prominence than of old. "The rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gowd." Vices that were once fashionable are disreputable now ; betting, horse-racing, duelling,

Sabbath desecration, marital infidelity are under the ban. The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount have found their way into the walk and conversation of the average man. Sin is still here but it does not find such open expression in flagrant vices. The world expects more of manhood. It certainly expects more of Christian manhood. The father of the poet Shelley was wont to say,

“ At church on Sunday to attend  
Will serve to make a man your friend.”

This, however, is not the reason why people go to church in these days. The world hates sham and Pharisaism and inconsistency. Let a Christian go astray and he is held up to derision in the newspapers. This is a great tribute paid to the ethics of Christianity. Something higher than ever before is expected of it.

But truth and morality cannot make either a nation or a man, unless there be something within and behind them, to-wit: moral energy. We go on, therefore, to say :

III. *This is the Golden Age of moral energy.* Truth and ethics are changed into power by a fire burning beneath them. The Church works with a purpose. A man, aside from his creed and personal graces, must in these times have something to do.

(1) There was a time when good people were chiefly concerned about their personal salvation. The chief end of man was to escape from that fire that is never quenched. The supreme desire was to read one's title clear to mansions in the skies. Each for himself, was the shibboleth of those days.

(2) At other times the people of God have been chiefly concerned for the preservation of the Church. This was the meaning of the Crusades; in them we find a stern endeavor to rescue the Holy Sepulchre, and so to vindicate the majesty of the Church and avenge her wrongs. The effort was not to convert the infidel, but to destroy him root and branch. *Vae victis!* This was the meaning of the Inquisition; the Church must be preserved by the burning out of heresy. So the rack and the thumb-screw, flashing swords and blazing fagots, were brought into requisition to save the Church. It seemed to be forgotten that this was God's affair and that he had pledged himself to the preservation of his Zion, saying, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

(3) In our time we speak of the Kingdom. This is the missionary age. All are summoned to work—men, women and children. All are summoned to work for the evangelization of the world—the deliverance of souls from sin. We have at last heard the Master say, "Go ye into all the world and evangelize." It was only two hundred years ago that Richard Baxter lamented, "The world lieth heavy on my heart. O, that I might but go and preach the glorious gospel among the Turks, Tartars and heathens!" At that time Christianity was provincial, now Christianity is cosmopolitan. Baxter could not go. Now any man can go. The era of exploration was long ago followed by the era of colonization, which has at length given way to the era of evangelization. The Chinese Wall has fallen down. A new figure—Japan—rises among the nations to be the champion of Buddhism; to make the last struggle on earth for a false religion, which in the near future must vanish like a



spectre into the limbo of all the false religions of the centuries gone by. We seem to be dwelling in the early twilight of the last days. The victory of Christ is a foregone conclusion. His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Is life worth living? Is life worth living now? Aye, a thousand times. Let us fall in with the men of Ephraim for the last gleaning. The blast of God's bugle calls us to the fords of Jordan. It devolves upon us to make many captives unto hope. A grander privilege is ours than ever was known in the days of the scourge and dungeon. Glorious heroes were the men of Abi-ezer, but Oreb and Zeeb are for us.

It is said that the battle of Gettysburg was notable above all the battles of our Civil War, in that all the troops on either side were engaged in it. Old John Burns was there with his flint-lock musket. All at it; always at it; altogether at it. The last battle of God's great crusade is for us. The glory of the last victory is for us. Let us so realize our privilege and our responsibility, also, that we may come at last, laden with the gleanings of the vintage, through the gates, into the city of God.

## THE PRONOUN OF FAITH.

### A Sacramental Meditation.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."—Ps. xviii. 2.

Luther thanked God for the personal pronouns. Let us go further and thank him for the possessive pronoun first person singular. It occurs eight times in our text, making a rare inventory of spiritual possession : "My God, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my strength, my buckler, the horn of my salvation, my high tower."

It is the common thing in these times to live in apartments. There is this to be said in its favor : there is an almost absolute relief from the responsibilities of home-keeping. No care of the furnace, no sweeping of walks, no worry about the morning meal, no tax collector, no retinue of servants ; it is indeed a *dolce far niente* sort of life. And yet, the average man would rather live in a thatched cottage of his own, than in the most palatial suite of rented rooms. The right of ownership goes so far ! It warms the blood to be able to say, "My wee bit ingle, my thrifty wife, my clean hearth-stone."

This pronoun marks the difference between barbarism and civilization. The Bedouin owns nothing save his spear, his prayer rug and his cilicia tent ; not

even the ground on which he makes his restless home. His tribe eats from a common dish and rests on the bosom of a common earth. Such communism prevails ever at the bottom of the social fabric. The negroes of our Southern States in "de ole slavery days" owned nothing. We hear much of their happy-go lucky content; their songs and dances in the quarters; but of rights and privileges, as of other personal possessions, they had none. The moment their chains were broken the struggle for proprietorship began. No sooner did they realize that they owned themselves than they conceived an ambition to own something beside themselves. The brightest hope of the Black Belt to-day is in the fact that they are struggling for something they can call their own; it may be only a two-acre plantation and a humble hut, but whenever a man begins to say "my" he is looking up, his career as a capitalist has begun, he is a stockholder in the commonwealth, his self-respect has come to the birth; the possessive pronoun first person singular has done it.

There are three degrees of apprehension; that is, of coming into the ownership of things: *First*, intellectual; *second*, emotional; *third*, vital. The last alone gives a fee simple right.

As to a given truth in geometry. (1) I see yonder on the blackboard a demonstration of this proposition, *The area of a circle is equal to that of a triangle whose base is equal to the circumference and whose height is equal to the radius of this circle.* I get an intellectual apprehension of the truth of this proposition from its demonstration on the board. The proof is so conclusive that I am constrained to say "I believe." (2) I learn presently that this is the

very proposition on which Archimedes was employed when the city of Syracuse was taken. He was down upon his knees engaged in drawing figures on the floor when the gates were forced. There was the flashing of a sword-blade and the mathematician lay dead as the penalty of absorption in his favorite pursuit. That which was previously a mere objective fact to me, now assumes a new interest. I can never again think of that circle and triangle without associating therewith the tragic story of Syracuse. My emotions have been enlisted. (3) In my desire to secure a portion of ground for a garden plot, I summon a surveyor who, to the measurement of the land, applies the foregoing mathematical principle. This brings it vastly nearer to me. In making this garden mine I built a fence along the base, the perpendicular and hypotenuse of that triangle, and by its cultivation I make my livelihood. So the fact which previously touched my intellect or my emotions alone, has now become an actual potent part of my life and the possessive pronoun first person singular may fairly be attached to it.

Let us approach in like manner the larger truth of human equality or the solidarity of the race. (1) We are forced to regard it as an ethnological fact. Our scientists have been enabled, by observing racial resemblances, to trace all tribes and nations back to a common source ; teaching us that we are all kins-folk, being the sons of Seth, who was the Son of Adam, who was the son of God. I yield an intellectual assent to this fact, but as yet it makes no profound impression upon me. (2) I stand in the shadow of Old Independence Hall in Philadelphia and hear the clang of Liberty Bell. They tell me that

the announcement which lies at the basis of our constitutional fabric has at length been made, "All men are created free and equal and with certain inalienable rights." My heart beats responsive to that truth; my blood runs hot and fast with patriotic emotion; I now not merely believe, but feel the great truth touching my heart. It has come vastly nearer than when it touched my brain alone, but it must come nearer still before it shall be fully mine. (3) My rights with respect to the little garden plot are invaded. A neighboring landlord of superior wealth and influence clamors for it as Ahab did for Naboth's vineyard. My plea is based upon the proposition that my influential neighbor is, under the great principle of human equality, no greater than I; that my rights are as sacred as his before the Common Law. My plea is heard; my claim is respected; thenceforth that truth, the equality of all men, has such a practical relation to my personal affairs, to my home and livelihood, that I am warranted in saying, "I have made it mine." At length I have, by a vital apprehension, vindicated a personal right in it.

All this by way of arriving at *a definition of faith*. We are saved by faith. The beginning of the Christian life is in getting a real apprehension of the great truth of the atonement, as it is written: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." "Only believe." "He that believeth in the Son hath entered into life." "The just shall live by his faith." "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But what is faith? or, what is it to believe in Christ?

I. *It is not merely to have an intellectual apprehension of the fundamental truths of Christianity.* A man may

consent to the truth of an objective dogma without in any profitable sense believing in it.

I stand beside the manger and look into the face of the Christ-child; doubting; questioning; hearkening to the voice of Scripture, of the great multitudes of believers and of history in the procession of centuries since the beginning of the Christian Era. By this I am forced to yield an intellectual assent to the proposition that this child in the manger is the incarnate Son of God. I note the difficulties in the way, crying, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh." And yet, by the overwhelming testimony in favor of this truth, I am compelled to assent to it.

Then I come to Calvary and stand under the shadow of the cross; here Jesus of Nazareth is dying. The rumbling of the earth, the strange darkness at high noon, the cry that pierced that darkness, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*, the voice of prophecy respecting this event, the testimony of that great multitude who assert that the heart of Jesus was broken under the burden of their sins, the tribute paid by all subsequent history to the unique importance of this tragedy, all force me to conclude that as this was no common man, so this was no ordinary death. The words of Rousseau are pressed in upon me as the conclusion of cold reason: "If Socrates died like a philosopher, then Jesus died like a God."

And now I stand beside the open sepulchre. I test the story of the alleged miracle here by the rules of common evidence and am convinced. It is easier to assent to the miracle, than to believe that the universal Church of Jesus Christ has affixed its faith to a colossal falsehood during these nineteen centuries.

“He was dead and is alive for evermore. He brake the bands of death, taking captivity captive, and hath ascended up on high to give gifts unto men.”

Here are three great truths of the Christian system : the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection of Jesus. The test of orthodoxy is to believe in these fundamental facts. My intellect asserts them; I am orthodox ; but the devils also believe and tremble. We have not reached faith thus far.

II. *Nor is it to yield an emotional assent* to the Christian system. We may supplement our syllogisms with “Hosannahs” and “Hallelujahs” and still be far from the kingdom of God. The worst of men have been known to stain their Bibles with their tears. A troupe of godless tourists, pausing in their travels at Ober-Ammergau, have gazed there upon the dramatic presentation of the great tragedy of the cross, and have been moved to passionate cries and sobs and then have gone their way to live again among the beggarly elements of this world. I stand in old Jerusalem with the multitude who crowned the man of Nazareth with thorns and robed him in ribald purple ; I see them beating him with scourges, spitting in his face, and deriding him ; I see them lead him beyond the gates with mad cries, “Crucify him ! crucify him !” I am moved with an infinite indignation when they nail his hands and feet upon the cross. “Oh, this is the great crime of the ages !” I exclaim ; “Was there ever greater depth of infamous cruelty ?” My emotion is like that of the Saxon King who, when the missionary told him the story of Calvary, drew his sword in fiery anger, saying, “Had I been there with my brave men, we would have avenged him !”

Nay, further, it is not the crime alone or the lamentable tragedy that affects me, but a realizing sense of the fact that Jesus, as the incarnate Son of God, coming forth as a knight errant for the deliverance of men from their sins, bears yonder upon his heart, like a great Atlas, the world's burden. He is tasting death for every man. O divine condescension ! O infinite compassion ! O unspeakable love !

All this and yet I have not attained unto faith. Feeling is not believing. To weep is not to surrender. The heart may throb to breaking and yet not practically grasp the saving power of the truth.

III. *Faith is the vital apprehension of Christ.* It does not merely assent to the fact, nor merely weep over it ; it throws the heart wide open to this incarnate Son of God and bids him come in and take possession. It says, "He loveth me and gave himself for me" ; and goes on to say, "He is my Saviour and my Friend."

The best definition of faith that was ever given is in the object-lesson of the sacrament. To believe in the truth is to receive it as a man receives food, so that it shall enter into his life ; as it is written, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." The bread which we eat is transformed into bone and sinew and blood ; nay, more, is transformed into thought and ambition and noble deed. We speak of bread, therefore, as the staff of life. Christ is the living Bread. In partaking of the bread upon the sacramental table we assert our faith in Jesus Christ in such a manner as that he is inextricably blended with our life. "We no longer live, but Christ liveth in us."

On the upper deck of the steamship Elbe, which



sailed from Bremen last Tuesday morning, a woman's eyes rested upon the life-boat ; she was impressed by its beautiful proportions, by its staunch construction and she said within herself, "In danger this would be a trustworthy craft." On that same day, later on, the skipper of the ship, standing beside the life-boat, told her how on the previous voyage a sailor had fallen overboard ; how that life-boat had been launched with all haste and breasting the waves had reached the strangling swimmer and saved him. She had previously convinced herself that the life-boat was so built as to be trustworthy ; her heart now responded to that conviction, touched, as it was, by the tale of the rescued sailor. On Wednesday morning the Elbe went down in the North Sea. That same woman, tossed about in the chill waters, seized hold of that life-boat ; the voice of one of the crew cried, "Thrust her off !" but other manlier hands drew her into the boat and saved her. To-day her thought toward that life-boat is far beyond what it was or could have been before she committed her destinies to it. There is a sense in which that life-boat has become her own eternal possession : the story of her life is forever bound up with it.

In the life of the disciple Thomas, there was probably no moment when he did not believe as a matter of fact that Jesus was the very Son of God. He had listened to his sermons and was prepared to say, "Never man spake like this man." He had seen his miracles and they added confirmation to his conviction respecting the divineness of Jesus. But there came a time when his Lord, crucified and risen from the dead, stood before him, saying "Reach hither thy fin.

gers and put them into these nail prints ; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into this wound in my side." Then Thomas believed, exclaiming with a conviction beyond that of mere intellect or emotion, "My Lord and my God !" Thence forward the great truths which centred in Christ were his own ; his own by a personal appropriation ; interwoven with the very fabric of his being. To him to live was Christ. His life was hid with Christ in God.

## THE TABERNACLE.

“Which was a figure for the time then present.”—HEB. ix. 9.

I wish we might go backward along the path of thirty-four centuries and stand on Peor above the plains of Moab, just where Balaam stood when he exclaimed, “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel; as gardens by the riverside and as groves of lign aloes beside the waters.” We are gazing down upon a scene of profound historic interest. Here are encamped the three millions of Israelites who have escaped from the bondage of Egypt and are now journeying toward the land of promise. As far as the eye can reach, mile upon mile, are tents gleaming in the sun. Observe the singularity of their arrangement. The encampment is an oblong square; in its centre, an open space more than a mile across; in the midst of that hollow square, the tabernacle, “a little spot enclosed by grace out of a dreary wilderness.” Over it is a luminous cloud, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the shekinah or “excellent glory of God.”

We are struck by the small proportions of this fabric; the length of its open court is only one hundred and seventy-five feet and its breadth eighty-seven feet. It seems in the far distance a mere speck in the midst of the vast quadrangular array of tents. It is quite large enough, however, for its purpose. It

was not intended to be a general auditorium, but a mere oracle—a meeting place for the priests, as the representatives of the people, with God.

It is interesting to note that this “tent of meeting,” so slight in its dimensions, occupies a considerable place in holy Scripture ; indeed, it occupies six times as much space as the story of the creation of the world. Nor is this without reason. God built the universal frame ; that was his affair. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ?” But in the building of the tabernacle he made use of second causes and in its service the Levites were appointed to be laborers together with him. There are some things which God keeps to himself. The fiat, “Let there be light,” tells all that he cares to reveal to us. But when he wishes a golden candlestick to be made, he must needs be particular as to details. The creating of the sun was his affair ; the adornment of the earthly sanctuary is ours. So with respect to certain of the great doctrines of our faith. You wish to know respecting the eternal decrees ; God has little to say. But if you ask the way of salvation, he will make it so plain by entering into the most minute particulars as to repentance and belief, that a wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein. The men who were concerned in the building of the tabernacle were not left to their own devices, but were required to follow minutely the plans and specifications which were delivered to Moses in the mount. Post and curtain, cord and tassel, knops and flowers, lamps and snuffers, were all made after a divine pattern. So in respect to all our common duties, it is God’s pleasure to help us to the very

utmost ; as it is written, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God and it shall be given him."

We are impressed, also, by the simplicity of this fabric. God never made a Westminster Abbey or a Gothic cathedral. The court of the tabernacle in the distance, yonder, is enclosed in white linen curtains suspended from thorn-wood posts which rest in silver sockets. Here is simplicity itself ; and here is a sure token of its divineness. All God's works are as simple as they are majestic ; such as the mountains and the overarching skies. He would have our forms of worship of like character. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices ? saith the Lord ; I am full of burnt offerings and the fat of fed beasts. Your new moons and your Sabbaths and your solemn assemblies, I cannot away with them. Cease to do evil ; learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Our broad phylacteries, our long prayers, our tithes of mint, anise and cummin, our conspicuous alms thrown into the trumpet mouth of corban, give him no pleasure. He stands at Jacob's well, between the solemn pomp and circumstance of Moriah on the one hand and Gerizim on the other, and says, "The time cometh when neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, ye shall worship God. God is a spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

This tabernacle of so slight dimensions and of such exceeding simplicity was the central fact in the whole economy of Israel. It was meet that it should stand in the centre of the encampment with all the

tents opening towards it ; for here was the seat of the judicial, legislative and executive power of the Theocracy. There are those who belittle the Church in our day, but the Church stands in the midst of history as the tabernacle stood in the centre of the Jewish camp. It is the one tremendous fact in civilization. It has ever been the dynamo of current events. It is not merely the rendezvous of God's people, but the great living organism through which they execute the divine purposes in the building up of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The world's progress has been parallel and co-extensive with church history. No doubt God could have gotten along without the Church as he could have done without the tabernacle ; but it has been his pleasure to organize the Church, the antitype of the tabernacle, for the salvation of the world. It began with a little coterie of eleven men, all of the humbler class ; to-day it is a mighty fellowship reaching from the river unto the ends of the earth. Let us not speak disparagingly of the Church ; for, as its growth shows, it appeals to the best instincts and noblest aspirations of all right-thinking men.

It is said that when the Cardinal Richelieu wished to build a magnificent palace, he selected the site of an ancient chateau where his ancestors had dwelt. The work of demolition began, but when the workmen had come to the inner chamber where the Cardinal himself had first seen the light and lain upon his mother's breast, he ordered them to desist and bade the architect so alter the design of the new edifice as to adjust all its proportions to that birth-room. So has the great fabric of civilization, which is only another name for the kingdom of truth and righteous-

ness, been reared upon the earth. Its centre is the Church, the depository of the Ark of the Covenant, the source and fountain of all gracious influences among men.

Let us come down from Peor now and approach the tabernacle. We pass along between the tents of the tribes of Israel until we come to the great open space, crossing which, we find ourselves at

I. *The door* ; a curtain of blue and purple and scarlet, hung upon four pillars. It speaks of Christ who said, "I am the door." Go round about this open court north and west and south and you will find no other. One door only, looking off toward the rising sun. "I am the door," said Jesus ; "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." There are many systems of religion but there is only one body of truth ; so it is written, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." We draw this curtain and entering find ourselves in

II. *The open court* ; and here are two objects of special interest, and two only :

(1) The altar of burnt offering. It speaks of Jesus and of Justification by Faith. Its fire never goes out ; the blood is always flowing over its brazen sides. The Israelite, who had sinned, brought a lamb for this altar and waited in suspense until he saw the smoke ascending, when he cried, "My sin is gone !" It cannot be supposed that he attributed any saving virtue to the slain lamb ; he must have known that it was a figure of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

There are those who take exception to a religion of blood. It is revolting to them ; they would

have an æsthetic offering, mayhap of fruit and flowers; but therein they make the mistake of Cain, who brought of the first fruits of the field and garden; but Abel offered, by faith, a more acceptable sacrifice in that he brought of the firstlings of the flock—by faith, in that he perceived afar off the glory of the vicarious sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God.

(2) The laver; a great basin with brazen feet. Here the priests and Levites cleansed themselves before they proceeded to their ministering. It speaks of Jesus and his great doctrine of regeneration; of the washing of the waters of regeneration; as he said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." There are those who say, "I am not fit to come to Jesus now"; let them observe that the altar stands before the laver. The fitness after the sacrifice. No man ever yet was "fit" to come to Jesus; a sense of fitness would indeed be an insuperable obstacle to his coming, for it would show an absence of conviction of sin. To the altar first and then to the laver.

"Just as I am and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot;  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come!"

We come now to the tabernacle proper; a structure made of acacia boards, overlaid with gold and covered with sealskins. It is divided into two apartments; the first called "The Holy Place"; thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide; and the second, just half as large, called "The Holiest of All." We are now standing before the curtain of this tabernacle; we enter and find ourselves in



III. *The Holy Place.* Here are three objects of special interest and only three :

(1) On our right is the table of shew bread ; twelve loaves, one for each of the tribes of Israel. It speaks of Christ : "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. I am that living bread which came down from heaven of which, if a man eat, he shall never hunger." Christ is our life ; "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you."

(2) On the left is the golden candlestick. It has seven branches which are fed with beaten oil from a great bowl in the centre. There are no windows in this apartment ; the only light-giver is this golden candlestick. It speaks of Christ who said, "I am the light of the world." It was because the world by wisdom knew not God, that he came to reveal him. He scatters the darkness of sin and ignorance, and the shadows that gather in the valley of death.

(3) The golden altar of incense. The incense was made according to a divinely given rule. The rabbis say, to counterfeit this incense was death. The golden altar, also, speaks of Christ, of his eternal intercession for us. As the herbs and costly spices were bruised that they might yield their fragrance, so by his agony, being wounded and bruised for us, he made for himself an all-prevailing name.

" Five bleeding wounds he bears,  
 Received on Calvary.  
 They pour effectual prayers ;  
 They strongly plead for me.  
 Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,  
 Nor let that ransomed sinner die ! "

It is said that when the high priest entered the Holy Place to make intercession for the worshipper,

who remained without, his safety and the success of his errand were made known by the tinkling of the silver bells upon the borders of his robe. In like manner are we assured of the prevailing power of the prayers of our great High Priest. Our visions of heavenly peace, our holy aspirations and resolute purposes, as well as the sweet promises that come to us from the oracles here and yonder, are the tinkling of the bells upon his robe. He ever liveth, he ever liveth, to make intercession for us.

IV. We have now come to the *Holiest of All*. We may not enter in. The high priest alone is permitted once a year, on the great day of atonement, to pass within its sacred precincts. Overawed, we kneel before the fine-twined curtain to present our supplication. It is the day of the great sacrifice; off yonder on Calvary, the Christ is bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. His heart is breaking under the world's burden; he dies in the midst of mockery and shame; the darkness gathers about him; the cry is heard, "My God! my God! Why hast thou forsaken me!" He has reached the uttermost of his vicarious pain; as it is written in our Creed, "He descended into hell." At length, with a loud voice, he cries, "It is finished!" and the darkness begins to rise. At that instant, kneeling before the veil of the Holiest, I lift my eyes and behold a wondrous thing; the veil is rent from the top to the bottom as if by a hand stretched down from above, and I look within upon the mysteries that no eye, save that of the high priest, has ever seen!

It is said that at the overthrow of Jerusalem the captain of the Roman army, moved with curiosity respecting the mysteries of the Jewish faith, which

were represented to be hidden within this sacred chamber, lifted the veil of the Holiest while his guard waited without. A moment later they heard a burst of laughter and the words, "There is nothing here but a wooden chest." Nothing here ! Alas ! spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. We stand at Bethlehem and behold nothing but a mother with an infant in her arms. Nothing ? "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." We come to Calvary and see nothing but a man dying on the cross. Nothing but that ?

" There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins ;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."

We enter Joseph's garden and behold nothing but an empty grave. Nothing but that ? "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law ; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The manger, the cross, the empty tomb : the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection. All these are nothing to carnal eyes, but to spiritual discernment they are the three tremendous verities of the Christian faith. "We preach Christ crucified ; to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness ; but to them that are saved, the wisdom and the power of God."

The Ark of the Covenant—the "wooden chest"—speaks eloquently of Christ. Within it are the tables of the Law ; not those which Moses broke in sudden anger, but the unbroken tables which set forth the perfect obedience of the Lord Christ ; by the impu-

tation of that righteousness, we shall enter heaven's gate ; as it is written, " There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."

The golden cover of the ark was called the mercy-seat. To that mercy-seat, under the Old Economy, none but the high priest had access. A new and living way is opened unto us by the rending of this veil, the bruised body of Christ, so that we may enter into this place of privilege.

" O may my hand forget her skill,  
My tongue be silent, cold and still,  
This throbbing heart forget to beat,  
If I forget the mercy-seat."

I kneel no more without the Holiest of All. I pass within and cast myself down beside the ark with my face upon its golden cover sprinkled with blood. The wings of the cherubim are over me ; the cloudy presence, the " most excellent glory," envelops me. I am come boldly unto the throne of grace where all may come in Christ, and kneeling thus I hear a voice : " The Spirit and the bride say, Come. Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is finished. The Old Economy is ended. Its shadows are scattered before the rising sun. Its secrets are disclosed. The veil is rent. The way into the Holiest is open. All may now become kings and priests unto God.

## TREASURES OF THE SNOW.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"—JOB xxxviii. 22.

I am sorry for city people who never have known the delights of rural life. "God made the country, man made the town." What do they know about the singing birds and flowing brooks, the blooming fields and golden harvests? What do they know about the joys of winter; the glassy river, the tinkling bells, the merry shout of children issuing from the school-house door into the pleasures of the falling snow? To us in the great metropolis a snow-storm means naught but unsightly heaps at the street corners waiting to be carted off: it suggests no more than a question of health and possibly another of honesty in the administration of municipal affairs.

Let us stand for a little while under the falling flakes and take the lessons that come to us. The treasures of the snow! Out of the mint of God up yonder falls this glorious wealth all stamped with his image and superscription. Inasmuch as snow was infrequent in the Holy Land there are not many references to it in Scripture; yet enough for helpful suggestion in many ways. Out of this treasury we bring seven golden texts, to wit:

I. "*The fool saith in his heart There is no God.*" The fool I catch a flake in my palm; nay, not there, else its fragile beauty will die in an instant, but rather

on a velvet cushion and put it under a microscope. Now let the "fool" look and say again, "There is no God!" Here is an epistle from somewhere asking as plainly as if pen and ink had written it, "Who made me?" Did this miracle come by chance? Nay, out of nothing, nothing comes. Now catch another snow-flake on this velvet cushion and a hundred more and a million more, for the air is filled with them; and out of these we will construct our proposition. If you speak of chance then let us reason under the law of chances. How shall we get our first term? By making a progression of products, thus: multiply your first flake by your second, the second by the third, and so on while the snow-flakes fall. Multiply until you have exhausted the last flake in the heavens, then multiply that product by the last snow-storm and so on until you have exhausted the last snow-flake that ever fell since the beginning of time. What have you? A line of figures belting the globe again and again and again like parallels of latitude. Now having our first term let us proceed with the calculation. It is a simple problem in proportion. *As this line of figures is to one, so is the probability of a supreme intelligence to the hypothesis of chance or a fortuitous concurrence of atoms.* It is beginning to dawn upon us now why the good Book pronounces him to be a "fool" who says "There is no God."

II. Our next golden text is this, "*In wisdom hath he made them all.*" A close examination of these snow-flakes under the glass reveals the fact, (1) that every one is perfect, absolutely perfect; and in this the snow-flake differs from every masterpiece of man. The thing we make may approximate nearer and nearer to perfection, but never reaches it. Put the

finest lace under the glass and it looks like a fishing-net of jute; its fairy figure running zigzag like a worm fence. On the other hand the snow-flake grows finer and finer the more you magnify it. Man's best work is a chronometer which will vary possibly a second in a twelvemonth. Wonderful! But if God were to run the planetary system by such a time-piece chaos would have ensued long ages ago. The sun is his chronometer. All his work is perfect, absolutely perfect. Perfection is the distinguishing characteristic of a divine thing. (2) Still further we note an infinite variety in these flakes of snow. Des Cartes announced that he had discovered ninety-three various forms or patterns. The words had scarcely fallen from his lips before another declared that he had found nine hundred. Indeed there is no limit to their diversity; it is fair to say that no two of them are precisely alike, just as no two leaves in Vallombrosa are alike, just as no two human faces are alike on all the earth. This infinite variety is also a distinguishing feature of the work of God. (3) But all these varied forms are patterned under a common law and under that law are uniform. How shall we account for this? Chance? Or has science otherwise explained it? "Oh, the ancients in Job's time knew little about snow or any other natural phenomenon. Many things have been discovered since then. All this is explained." Ah, by whom? What is snow? "Congealed vapor" But what is vapor and how congealed? Go on with your explanation. Whence this law? Law is usually supposed to suggest a law-giver. You ask us to believe in a law like this with all its marvellous manifestations and no one behind it? You smile at our faith and

call it credulity ; but here is a burden that our faith cannot bear ; it requires a greater credulity than ours to believe that all this merely happened. Go back as far as you can in your scientific researches and you will never reach the ultimate. You come to a curtain hanging before an inner chamber ; draw it and you stand in the Holiest of All.

III. Our next golden text is this, "*Lo, here is the hiding of his power.*" How feeble seem these fallen flakes.

" Out of the bosom of the air,  
Out of the cloud-folds of his garment shaken ;  
Over the woodlands wild and bare,  
Over the harvest fields forsaken,  
Silent and soft and slow  
Falleth the snow."

Yet here is God's dynamite. In this apparent weakness is the hiding of his strength. The flake that falls into the cleft of the rock, with a few more of its feeble kinsfolk, shall take hold of the roots of the everlasting mountain and tear them asunder. This is God's way of working. He builds his temple without the sound of hammer or of axe. The sunshine, the atmosphere, the fallen rain—these are his calm potencies. You trample the snow-flakes under foot, the children play with them ; yet they have within them the possibility of great convulsion. Here are magazines of power. Men work amid demonstration, the shouting of ten thousand voices, the booming of heavy artillery. God's power is quiet, constant, persistent, infinite, everywhere. So ubiquitous is his omnipotence that men have sometimes taken Force to be their god. When it was desired to blow a ledge of rocks out of New York harbor there



were years of preparation ; digging of mines, placing of charges, laying of fuses ; then the city stood listening ; the explosion, the water spout, and it was done. God rides through the universe in his chariot of Almightyness and its ponderous wheels move as silently as the waving of a butterfly's wings.

IV. Still another of the golden texts is, "*He giveth his snow like wool.*" Rather like a covering of wool ; that is to say, a coverlet. The figure appeals to us all. We are back again in the trundle-bed and the dear mother has come to hear us say our prayer and then to arrange the coverlet and tuck us in. So the good God cares for all nature ; the seeds and roots ; the burrowing and hibernating creatures ; he covers them all over ; giving his snow like wool. O infinite love ! Shall he not much more care for you, O ye of little faith ? These snow-flakes are "feathers from the wing of the Almighty protection." He cares for us along the journey of life and when all is over and we lie down to our final rest, he still lays his coverlet above us. Out in the graveyard just now, as far as eye can see, are the mounds of the sleeping dead. He has given his snow like wool. So they abide the coming of the Lord's great day.

V. Another of the golden texts is, "*His raiment was white as snow.*" Here are three visions of the glorious One. Daniel saw him, when all the earth powers had vanished, approaching in a chariot of flame to take the seat of universal empire, while ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, and lo ! "His garment was white as snow." The chosen three went up with the Only Begotten of the Father into the Mount of Transfiguration, and while the cloud—"the most excellent glory"—folded them in,

they saw him changed ; his face shining like the sun and his garments "white as no fuller on earth could whiten them." The aged dreamer in Patmos saw him in the midst of the golden candlestick clothed in a priestly garment down to his feet ; in his right hand seven stars ; his voice as the sound of many waters ; his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength ; and his head and his hairs were "white as snow." All this in token of his holiness. The great multitude around his throne are ever praising him and saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty !" Alas, then, what is to become of us, for we are as an unclean thing ? "Have mercy upon me, O God !" cried David shamed and tortured by his accusing conscience, "Have mercy upon me according unto thy loving kindness, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin ; for I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean ; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Is there an answer to that prayer ? Can the sin-defiled soul be washed and made whiter than snow ? Aye !

VI. For here is another of the golden texts, "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*" These falling flakes are messengers from the City of the Great King ; each of them bringing a white flag of truce with overtures of peace.

What is the blackest thing in all the world ? Not jet, nor ebony ; not the raven's plume, nor the pupil of an Ethiop's eye. The blackest thing in all the

world is said to be the blight at the heart of a flower when it is just stricken with death. So the blackest thing in the moral universe is sin at the centre of a soul, spreading corruption through the whole nature of man.

What is the reddest thing in the world? Not the glow of the sunrise or of the sunset; not the heart of a ruby. The reddest thing in the world is the stream that flows from the fountain of life. Blood; "the life is in the blood." The most vivid of all tragedies is that of Calvary. In all the moral universe there is naught that so touches the heart of the race.

What is the whitest thing in the world? Not ivory, nor molten silver, nor alabaster; not a lily painted on a spotless wall. The whitest thing in the world is the driven snow, for this is not superficial, but whiteness through and through. In all the moral universe there is nothing so glorious as the whiteness of holiness; the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints.

What is the greatest thing in the world? Love! Aye. Not our love to God, but God's love to us manifest in Jesus Christ. The love that holds the hyssop-branch of our frail faith and with it sprinkles the blood upon the soul defiled with the blackness of sin, until it becomes as white as the driven snow. This is the marvellous alchemy of grace. There is forgiveness with God.

VII. And yet another of the golden texts, "*When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was as when it snoweth in Salmon.*" Here is the picture: a mountain-side swept bare by the wind, the snow driven hither and thither upon it. What does it mean? These

are not drifting masses of snow; these are the bones of the slain, bleached in the sun; these are shields of the mighty; these are ermine cloaks, royal mantles cast away in flight. A mighty rout! God's enemies have been put to shame. The great squadron has come forth riding on white horses and clothed in white linen, with one at their head arrayed in a garment dipped in blood—one who trod the wine-press alone in their behalf. Armageddon is over. There are shouts of victory in the distance. Babylon is fallen! All hail the power of Jesus' name! And here on Salmon naught but the drifting snow.

Thanks be to God for this assurance of the glorious outcome. His Word is doing its work: "*His word shall not return unto him void, but shall be like the snow* which cometh down from heaven; it shall accomplish that which he doth please and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it." In God's economy all things have their uses. Every snow-flake is under commission. So am I; so are you. God help us to praise him in an implicit obedience like that of the forces of nature of which it is written: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise him from the heavens. Praise him from the earth. Ye monsters and all deeps; ye fire and hail; snow and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling his word!"

## WHAT IS RELIGION ?

“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”—Jude 21.

The man who wrote this brief epistle is almost unknown to us. (1) He was a half-brother of Jesus and had probably, like him, learned the trade of a carpenter. (2) He was called also Thaddæus and Lebbæus, perhaps to distinguish him from that other Jude who, by betraying his Lord, had made the name forever infamous. (3) But one fact is narrated of him in Scripture. In our Lord's last interview with his disciples the night before his crucifixion, he had said, “I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come to you and will manifest myself unto you,” and Judas, not Iscariot, saith unto him, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world ?” and Jesus answered and said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.” (4) He was a plain man ; uneducated in the schools and unfamiliar with the arts of the rhetorician, but possessed of admirable common sense—the rarest of gifts. He wastes no words, rounds no periods, does not trouble himself about profundities or sublimities, but comes straight to the point. (5) He was loyal to “the truth once delivered to the saints,” and by the same token he was a sincere hater of

schism and heresy. We may be certain he would not have written this epistle—called catholic, because addressed to the universal Church—unless circumstances had demanded it. The Gnostics and Ebionites and Antinomians were carrying things with a high hand. Some one must rebuke them. Some one must admonish the Church to hold fast the form of sound words. If James, the pastor of the Jerusalem Church, had been here, he would have done it most effectively; but James had been slain with the sword. If Peter had been here, he would have sent forth a ringing manifesto; but alas! he too had suffered martyrdom. Or if John were here; but John was an exile on a far off island in the Ægean Sea. So Jude must write. The fingers that were cramped by manual toil are adjusted to the stylus; he writes briefly, clearly, without a wasted word. Here is the sum and substance of his letter: *Beloved, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny our Lord Jesus Christ. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.*

We have here the core of the whole matter. It is not easy to frame a definition of religion, but this writer succeeds in doing it. We are always in danger of forming partial views of a great subject. The Pilgrim Fathers, who landed on the coast of New England, said, "Here is a bleak and barren land ; a land of fierce storms and bitter winters, but not unsuitable to men in search of freedom to worship God." The Cavaliers, who colonized tidewater Virginia, said, "Here is a temperate clime ; warm enough and cool enough for such as do not object to working by proxy for their living." Ponce de Leon and his men, touching on the southern coast, said, "Here is the country of sunshine, Florida, the land of flowers. Here is the spot for a *dolce far niente* life." The Pilgrims, the Cavaliers and the Spaniards all were right and all were wrong. America is not to be described by a scrutiny of three harbors ; you must circumnavigate the continent. So of every truth. So of religion itself. It is a circle and we are ever in danger of being satisfied with a segment of it. So it has come about that men, catching a glimpse of the great verity, have cried, "We have found it !" And so it has happened that each denomination of believers, knowing somewhat of the truth, have been disposed to say, "The temple of the Lord are we."

Let us note some of the errors which have been made in undertaking to define religion ; due in every case to a partial and fragmentary view of truth.

*First mistake:—religion is dogma.* A truth becomes dogma to any mind the moment it is apprehended as proven beyond peradventure. A creed is a system of such truths. The malady of our age is credo-phobia. It is the fashion to say that creed is a matter of

slight importance so long as we live well. But before we fall in with that assertion let us be sure that we mean it.—The grocer whom you patronize must have a creed ; he must believe that there are sixteen ounces to the pound, that sand is not sugar, that chicory is not coffee, and that honesty is the best policy. If he have not a code of principles—that is to say, a creed made up of such simple truths—you will not patronize him.—You will not cast your vote for a candidate who has not a creed ; he must believe in an honest ballot, a sound currency, a just system of tariff, a wise adjustment of the rights of the individual states to those of the general government, and that *vox populi* is the nearest possible approach in political matters to *vox Dei*. If he be not prepared to say that he believes in these and similar truths, you set him down as a demagogue ; for the only difference between a statesman and a demagogue is that one believes something and the other is whatever the circumstances of the hour may make him.—If you wish to cross the ocean, you will take ship with a captain who has a creed ; who believes in sun and quadrant, in compass and chart ; who believes that it is better for you to be over the water than under it ; who believes that two ships cannot sail in opposite directions over precisely the same course without getting into trouble. So in any department of common life, a man is untrustworthy unless he have a creed ; that is, unless he can say, *Credo*, I believe in something. Why then should a minister of the gospel, dealing in the great matters that touch our eternal destiny, be of a less positive character ? He surely should be able to lay his hand upon the great fundamentals of life and immortality and say without a doubt or mis-



giving, "I believe them." So, indeed, should any man who is travelling on to eternity. He should satisfy himself at once and beyond misgiving of the truth or falsity of the great propositions that centre in God. But a creed is not the sum total of religion ; it is a segment of the circle, but it is not the circle. We cannot be religious without a creed, but a creed alone will not make us so.

*Second mistake :—religion is a life* , that is to say, it is a creed crystallized, formulated, vivified in good works. There is a measure of truth in this statement ; for faith without works is dead. The most of us can recall through the years the figure of some venerable deacon who was scrupulous in his orthodoxy, irreproachable in his outward life, keeping the law, paying his honest debts, constant in his attendance on the sanctuary, ever ready to open the devotional meeting with prayer ; whose name was, nevertheless, a reproach because he seemed to have no bowels of compassion. The sufferings of the poor made no appeal to him ; in vain was his aid solicited for the improvement of the general weal. Let others feed the hungry and clothe the naked ; let others endow colleges and asylums ; let others attend to public enterprises ; it was enough for him to attend to his own personal character. He was an upright man, indeed, but a man without a life. God be praised that in these days we are discussing sociological problems ; asking how we may make the world better and men's lives sweeter and happier. Abuben-Adhem has come to the front, saying, 'Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.' But good works are not all. They do not make a complete definition of religion ; "for by the deeds of the law shall no

flesh be justified." The hand like the head is a necessary part of the body, but not the whole of it ; nor indeed the vital centre of it.

*Third mistake :—religion is a cult*, or a particular form of worship. Rites and ceremonies are not to be belittled. The Church is of divine appointment. Its two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, were instituted by Christ himself. No man who loves the bridegroom will disparage or ignore the bride ; our Lord himself honored the ritual of the house of God. But there is an immense difference between Churchianity and Christianity. The best churchmen of our Saviour's day were the Pharisees, whose name was derived from a word signifying to separate, because they had separated themselves from their fellows by a claim of peculiar sanctity. What will you have ? Devotion ? Behold them making long prayers at the corners of the streets. Fasting ? Lo, they fast twice every week, though the law requires but a single fast in the year, to wit, on the great Day of Atonement. Beneficence ? They pay tithes of all that they get—far beyond the legal requirement—tithes of the garden herbs, mint, anise, and cummin. Devotion to the Scriptures ? See their broad phylacteries and the frontlets between their eyes inscribed with the sacred legend, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." And yet the severest denunciation pronounced by our Lord was against these high churchmen : "Woe unto you, Pharisees, hypocrites, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell !" Of these men he said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed theirs, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God." Let us not, therefore, depend upon our church mem-

bership alone. A man may be a member of the church in good and regular standing and still have no place in the Lamb's book of life.

*Fourth mistake :—religion is a sentiment.* I would to God that we were all more tender of heart, more sensitive and quick to noble thought and purpose. The great truths are of such importance that our feelings should be profoundly stirred by them. "God!" "Calvary!" "The Judgment!" "Heaven!" "Hell!" There are worlds of meaning in these simple words ; the very mention of each should thrill us instantly through and through. But while feeling is an important factor in religion, it must not be made to overshadow all. I remember a young man whose custom was, with pious regularity, to present himself at the anxious seat with the opening of "the protracted services" of each winter. It occurred always during the singing of the hymn,

"Come to the Lord and seek salvation,  
Sound the praise of his dear name ;  
Glory, honor and redemption,  
Christ the Lord has come to reign !"

It is thirty years since he began and I am informed he is still doing it ; taking three months annually for revival and nine months for falling from grace. Religion is not chills and fever, but a wholesome steadfast life. It is not like a tress of purple alga torn asunder and swept by every wave and eddy, but a rock in mid ocean beaten in vain by storm and tempest. It is not sentiment but conviction. There is one thing better than feeling ; that is duty. Any man can go into battle when his blood runs hot in the excitement of the hour, but to go down to Balaklava with the Light Brigade "into the jaws of

hell" in cold blood to obey a command, that is sublime. At the beginning of the month when our bills come in, we do not ask whether or no we feel the obligation, but proceed to pay them like honest men. So let us attend to the affairs of our Christian life, praying God to keep our hearts warm and eager and full of the enthusiasm of truth and righteousness, but resolute, with or without feeling, to do what duty shall require.

Now then, having canvassed some of the partial views of religion, let us approach its full definition in this injunction, "*Keep yourselves in the love of God.*" It is written that a certain lawyer came to Jesus and said, "Good Rabbi, what is the first and greatest commandment?" And Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment." If so, then all the energies of an earnest life should be directed toward two things; to enter into this love and to abide in it.

But how? Can I force myself to love God? the affections do not obey the command of the will. I cannot say, "I will love," as I say, "I will smite with my hand," or, "I will stamp with my foot." Nevertheless the responsibility of loving God is upon me and my eternal life depends upon it. How do we awaken our emotions? Not indeed by crying, "Awake!" but by presenting to the mind the objects which arouse these emotions. I stimulate my sense of duty not by an effort of the will, but by gazing on the landscape—blue sky and verdant forest and silver river,—moving me to cry, "How wonderful!" How do I stimulate my sense of indignation? By pondering on the unspeakable Turk, his tyrannies

and atrocities, until the fires flame within me. How do I arouse my sense of compassion? Not by saying, "Now I will pity," but by climbing up the rickety stairways into the attics where the poor are enduring the pangs of hunger and the sick are tossing upon beds of languishing. "The eye affecteth the heart."

So do I enkindle my love toward God ; by contemplating him. But where shall I behold God? In the person of Jesus Christ. It is to this very end that he has made himself manifest in the flesh, that we might behold him and love him. "How sayest thou, 'Show us the Father' ? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" Go look on Jesus in the carpenter shop entering into all the pain and weariness of common toil, with chips and shavings around his feet, an honest workman. This is God. Go hear him as he preaches in Solomon's Porch the wonderful truths of the kingdom, touching with a bold hand, as never did human philosopher, all the great problems that reach out into the endless life, making our pathway as clear as day. This is God. Go follow him in the thoroughfares ; see along the way the couches whereon the sick are lying and mark how he heals them—opening the blind eyes, wiping away the leper's spots and making the deserts of life rejoice and blossom as the rose. This is God. Go up to Calvary and see him dying there, bearing the world's sin upon his breaking heart. See the deep darkness closing in around him and hark to his cry, as bearing our penalty he descends into hell for us, "My God ! my God ! Why hast thou forsaken me ?" Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed. This is God. Look yonder where he stands

on the right hand of the infinite Majesty, lifting his pierced hands in our behalf ; for he ever liveth to make intercession for us. This is God.

O friends ! the trouble is, the world is too much with us. We dwell amid its cares and pleasures and rarely turn aside to look toward the high place where he dwelleth. How can we complain of lack of love, if we neglect to look upon his face ; if we care not to see the glory of the Infinite as it is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ ?

Behold the beginning and the midst and the end of the whole matter : Love God. All else must follow. It is like the commerce that is constantly going on between the sea and clouds ; the ascending vapors and the descending dews and rains are all obedient to the law of gravity. It fills the fountain to slake the traveller's thirst ; it waters the field to satisfy the world's hunger ; it fills the rivers to float the ships of the nations. In like manner all noble purposes and all holy aspirations are under the dominion of love toward God. If we love him, our creed will follow ; for we shall believe whatever he says. If we love him, we shall not fall short of the good works of a useful life ; for we shall tread closely in the footsteps of him who went about doing good. If we love him, we shall honor his church ; because the church is the bride of God. If we love him, our hearts will thrill in response to all the great verities which centre in him.

The word of Jesus addressed to his wayward friend, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" had in it all the questions of all the catechisms of the universal church. And the thrice-given answer of Peter, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,"

had in it all true systems of theology from the beginning until now. It's love that makes the world go round ; the love of good men for the great Father, out of which proceeds the love of the universal brotherhood, has in it the potency of all faith and character. If we apprehend this, we shall come to know finally what this means, "Now abideth faith, hope, love ; but the greatest of these is love." And that other saying also, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

## WOMAN AND THE SABBATH.\*

"And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?"—JUDGES IV. 14.

The importance of the Fourth Commandment is manifest in its opening word, "Remember." This suggests the danger of forgetting. It is a curious fact, that because of the perverseness of human nature, matters of the supremest moment are most likely to escape our thought. A peasant in the Vale of Chamounix will remember when to milk his cows and set his curds more easily than when to say his pater-nosters; his eyes are more constantly fixed on his dairy than on the everlasting mountains which encircle him.

It is noteworthy that the two most important facts in our religion are emphasized by "signs." (1) The greatest of doctrinal truths is the vicarious death of Christ, and this is kept before the mind of the universal Church by the Eucharist; "Do this," said Jesus, "in remembrance of me." (2) The greatest of ethical facts is the duty of Sabbath observance. No institution in the world is more important to the welfare of the race. It rests upon a double sanction: God's cessation from work at the close of creation—as it is

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\* This sermon was delivered, by request, at the first public meeting of the Woman's National Sabbath Alliance.



written, "*For* in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: *wherefore*, the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it";—and on the divine rest at the close of the great redemptive work when Jesus in his resurrection triumphed over death and hell. The Fourth Commandment is repeatedly called a "sign"; that is to say, the token of a covenant which God made with his people. In this covenant he has distinctly said that he will overthrow the nation which refuses to keep the Holy Day, and has promised, per contra, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth."

The age through which we are passing is characterized by an almost universal contempt for the past. "Ring out the old, ring in the new." It is enough to say of anything that it is "traditional," handed down through the years, in order to expose it to derision. Everybody knows what is held in certain quarters as to the traditional view of the inspiration of Scripture; that view being that the Scripture is the inerrant Word of God. We hear much also in contemptuous vein of the traditional view of the Atonement; that view being that Jesus took our sins in his own body on the tree, bearing the shame, the bondage and the penalty in such a vicarious manner that by his stripes we are healed.

So as to the traditional view of Sabbath ob-

servance. The Puritan Sabbath! How the average man derides it, seeing only the dark and melancholy side of a character that was braced against the storms of the fiercest tyranny and persecution the world ever knew. No men are perfect, and surely the Puritans were not; but even in the manner of their keeping of the Sabbath there is not a little that we might copy with advantage: the family altar, the sweet psalmody, the uplifted faces of quaint children who hearkened with a simple, reverent faith to the heroic tales of Scripture, the holy hours of meditation and communion with the Most High. Is it not just possible that in our reaction from those over-strenuous days, we are getting too far the other way? In any case it will do us no harm to pause and reflect. We cannot be too careful as to a matter so closely touching our spiritual welfare and destiny. We cannot afford to make any mistake in our observance of the Sabbath in which God asserts his property right, saying, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

I pause here to pay a momentary tribute to the American Sabbath Union. It has never obtruded itself upon the public gaze, but in all movements, looking toward the enactment and enforcement of salutary laws as well as in the creating and fostering of a just public sentiment, it has done valiant service. A step forward is now proposed. The women of our country are to unite in an organized effort for the preservation of the Lord's Day. It is a movement of vast promise. We may not, perhaps, admit that Adam Clarke found the precise mathematical ratio when he said, "One woman is worth seven and one-half men"; but sure it is that women can do

some things better than men and can in all things lend valuable aid and comfort.

It was a great day for Israel when Deborah left the shadow of the palm-tree, where she sat in judgment, and went northward to summon Barak to the defence of his people. For twenty weary years, Jabin, the king of Canaan, had oppressed them. He had nine hundred chariots of iron. The name of Sisera, his commander-in-chief, was one to be spoken in a whisper,—a brave, bloody man. The courage of the Israelites had all oozed out. Then up rose Deborah, a mother in Israel. The battle was fought in the plain of Esdraelon. The song was sung upon the heights: "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength!" Let us hope and pray that the rallying of the women of the Church in behalf of Sabbath observance may be followed by a like triumphant song.

How can the American woman make her power felt in arresting the prevalent sins of Sabbath desecration and promoting the observance of that Holy Day?

I. *By her influence at home.* Here is woman's coign of vantage. "The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world." If there is a due regard for the Sabbath in domestic life, the rest will take care of itself. For home is the fountain from which flow forth all the streams of social and civil life.

(1) It is for woman to say whether there shall be a family altar or not. I have rarely stood upon a more impressive spot than just inside the threshold of the straw-thatched cottage at Alloway, for it was

here in the simple beauty of a peasant's home that Robert Burns received the inspiration of "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

" The cheerful supper done, wi' serious face  
 They round the ingle form a circle wide ;  
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
 The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride.  
 They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;  
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :  
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,  
 Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name.

" Then kneeling down, to Heaven's eternal King,  
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays :  
 Hope ' springs exulting on triumphant wing,'  
 That thus they all shall meet in future days :  
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
 In such society, yet still more dear,  
 Where circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

" From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
 That makes her loved at home, revered abroad :  
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,  
 An honest man's the noblest work of God."

(2) It is for women to say whether secular work shall be suspended in the home-life or not. It is worth while to remember the emphasis which is put upon this matter in the Fourth Commandment: "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." What is this? Nor thy *maid servant*. Do our Christian women sometimes forget that God has laid this injunction upon them? No work in the home on the Sabbath save the work of necessity or mercy. Artillerymen say that there are periods in a prolonged

battle when the firing must cease. The battery must rest, that the guns may cool; and time must be given also, in the midst of the roar and danger, for the lifting of the smoke, that the gunners may take aim. This is the purpose of the Sabbath, to give the needed rest in preparation for the renewed toil of the secular days.

(3) It is for the women to say whether the Sunday newspaper shall be the domestic oracle or not. Is this a little matter? Not so! It is the head and front of all the offending. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines." It is the Sunday newspaper that opens the door for the entering in of all Sabbath desecration. The one reason which is given for its publication, to wit, that we may keep apace with the world, is the supreme reason for rejecting it. The divine purpose in establishing the Sabbath was to give the people an opportunity of getting out of the world and away from it. It is a call to the soul to come up out of the mists of the lower valleys into the clear atmosphere with God.

(4) It is for the women to say whether the next generation shall be a generation of Sabbath observers or not. They may not be able to transform the lives of their fathers and husbands, or to prevent them from balancing their ledgers and reading the secular papers on the Holy Day. But if they are true to their responsibilities, they can cause that matters shall be different a quarter of a century from now. Lord Shaftesbury said, "You want a new generation of men and women; you can have it by training up a new generation of children." As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined. The boy is father of the man.

II. *Her influence in society.* Here woman reigns supreme. She makes the customs of social life. She

determines what its culture, its vices, its marriages and divorces, its scandals and dissipations shall be. She decides whether its womanly ideal shall be Queen Esther or Martha Washington or Anne Hathaway or Trilby. Just now we hear much of social functions on the Sabbath, of literary conversations and receptions and musicales. And the habit of Sabbath visitation seems to be growing more and more prevalent, even in Christian homes. If this is a true report, then it is because our Christian women have permitted it.

Let us at this point lay down the proposition that *there is lawfully no such thing as social life, in the general acceptance of that phrase, on the Lord's Day*. Any attempt to create such an order of things is sure to be followed by social corruption. The Germans have found it so. In their country, the Sabbath is the great day for music and literary converse and dramatic presentations. And what is the result? The Sabbath, which was intended for the moral and spiritual betterment of men, is a very plague spot in the German civilization. The story was all told by Prof. Roscher, a distinguished scientist, who recently in an analysis of a statistical report showed the curious fact that the great majority of women who commit suicide, do so on Sunday, while the majority of men who take their lives, do it on Monday. How is this fact accounted for? On Sunday when the beer gardens and the music-halls and the theatres are all open, the women, in the absence of their husbands, are left to bear alone the weary cares of the home-life; and, lacking the sympathy of those who at the altar promised to love, honor and protect them, they find life not worth living. The men, on the other hand, awake on Monday morning to loathe themselves

for the dissipations of the previous day, and this is their hour for the desperate deed. And despite this showing there are people who prate about the glories of the German Sabbath!

The social life of God's people is in connection with the sanctuary service. "Thither the tribes go up." It is a goodly fellowship. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the face of his friend." "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." Does this seem to give a melancholy aspect to the Holy Day? God forbid. Why should it be esteemed a melancholy thing to spend the hours in holy aspiration or in converse respecting the great truths and problems that reach out into the eternal ages. If this seems melancholy, it can only be to such as are averse to the noblest and best; to such as are wedded to the earth and are by that token the more in need of the uplift of the Holy Day.

III. *In business life.* The mind of the Lord is very clear as to secular work on the Holy Day. The stoning of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was intended to emphasize at the very beginning of the Theocracy the seriousness of the breach of the Fourth Commandment at this point. Of the same purport was the stern admonition of Nehemiah addressed to those who sold their commodities in the market places of Jerusalem on the Lord's Day. It was in vain that he closed the city against them; for they continued to bring fish and grapes and figs and garden vegetables which they offered for sale outside the gates. He then drove them away saying, "If ye return, I will lay hands upon you." All this would have been unnecessary, however, had the women of Jerusalem assumed a proper attitude toward these

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hucksters.\* It was for them to say whether the marketing necessary for their domestic life, should be done upon the Sabbath or not. They could have arrested the abuse, had they said to these market-men, "If you continue to offer your wares on the Sabbath, we will not patronize you on that or any other day."

If any of the important business houses of New York are open on the Sabbath, it is because the women choose to have them so. But, you say, the reputable shops are all closed on the Lord's Day. Not so. It is true, the doors are shut and bolted, but the wares within are exposed to public inspection through the columns of the Sunday newspaper. You read these advertisements at your leisure in your homes, and on Monday betake yourselves to the bargain counter. It is respectfully submitted that such establishments as these are in fact doing a splendid business on Sunday; indeed the very best business of the entire week; and you excellent women are parties to it. What shall be done? *Patronize the merchants who honor the Sabbath.* There are some who do not advertise on that day. Lend them your countenance and support. If one-tenth of the Christian women of New York were to take this position, true to their consciences and Christian principles, it is probable that this particular breach of the Sabbath would come to an end. "But this would be a boycott." So be it. There is indeed a divine boycott put upon all evil things. We are commanded to encourage the righteous in their obedience, and as for those who habit-

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\* A considerable number of the market-men of New York have recently sent to their patrons a request that raw oysters might not be served as a dinner course on the Sabbath-day; saying that, if house-keepers would generally assent to this slight request, a large force of market-men, who are now employed in looking after this branch of the business, might enjoy their Sabbath rest. It would appear as if no Christian woman could hesitate a moment in such a matter.



ually offend the divine law, "He that giveth him God-speed, is partaker of his evil deeds."

IV. *In politics.* Here woman is the power behind the throne. In Plutarch's life of Cicero he says, "The good wife Terentia had her ambitions and, as Cicero admits, took a far greater share with him in politics than she permitted him to have in domestic affairs." This is generally true I imagine, and if not, it ought to be.

We may differ as to the desirableness of female suffrage; but we shall probably all agree that it is part of a wife's business to see that her husband votes the right ticket and lends his influence to good government. A week ago to-day the fifty-third Congress closed its session. Far into the holy Sabbath, which from the beginning of our government has been regarded as *dies non*, these legislators sat in God-defying counsel. It was meet that a Congress which has been so generally condemned by all parties for its folly and impotency, should thus end its career in a flagrant misdemeanor. There was a grim appropriateness in the burst of laughter which greeted the message of the President congratulating them on the cessation of their labors. And never did the Doxology meet with a more popular echo than when, as the gavel fell, the reporters in the gallery sang:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below."

In a similar session of congress some years ago an old man of reverent aspect arose in the visitor's gallery and said, "Ye are committing an offence against the great Jehovah in thus breaking his Holy Day. The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God!"

It is in the power of the great multitude of Christian women in America to prevent the recurrence of this and similar transgressions against the divine law. Let them use their utmost influence to prevent the re-election of Congressmen who have been blameworthy in this matter. It need scarcely be said that the women need not wait for their own enfranchisement to accomplish this. Let us remember what Cato said and act accordingly : "All men naturally govern the women ; we Romans govern all men ; and our wives govern us."

V. *In the church.* The great majority of church members are women—just as a far greater majority in our jails and penitentiaries are men ; and it is the influential majority in both cases. It is obvious, therefore, that the moral tone of the Church is very much what the women choose to make it.

It is an old proverb, "Like priests, like people"; but this will read equally well the other way. Ministers are but human and their people must needs influence them. The Mayor of New York City, in defending his advocacy of the Sunday saloon, has declared that more than fifty ministers have written to signify their agreement with him. Of course we may not presume to question the truth of this statement. We are left then to believe, that there are more than fifty men in the pulpits of New York City in solemn covenant with God to observe his law and advocate its inviolability, who have declared themselves in favor of the opening of dram-shops on the Lord's Day. The thing seems incredible, but we are bound to accept it. What then? Will you Christian women consent to sit under the teaching of such men? If the trumpet give an uncertain sound on the Sabbath

question, or on any other great questions of public morality, what shall the righteous do?

It devolves upon our Christian women also to see that the right sort of instruction is given in our Sunday-schools. Alas, that we should be willing to farm out the spiritual education of our sons and daughters to persons of whose influence we seldom make inquiry. It has been said that the first four years of a child's life are more important than the four years spent at college. If you wish to send your child to a kindergarten, you insist that the teacher shall present credentials. How much more important that you should be informed as to the efficiency of the Sunday-school teacher, who has to do with the great problems that reach out into the endless life.

You may be immensely influential by your prayers for those who are appointed to minister in spiritual things. Lyman Beecher tells of an old woman in his congregation, who, laid aside from the common duties of an active life, informed him that during the services of the sanctuary she busied herself continuously in prayer for him. As he preached, his eyes would rest upon her; her lips were moving; he knew that she was presenting his name before the throne of the heavenly grace; it was an immeasurable restraint put upon him. The weakest saint may thus become a mighty factor in the affairs of the Church. If ministers, elders, teachers, people, go wrong, the probability is that you personally are, in a measure, to blame for it.

I hail, therefore, as a good omen, this organization of Christian women to secure the Sabbath rest. The old Knickerbocker Church has a motto, *Een dracht maakt macht*; "In union there is strength." But

better still and more literally, "A long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together." That way lies victory in every reform movement. It was a great day for reform in England under Charles I. when Ann Stugg, the brewer's wife, appeared at the door of the House of Commons leading a long procession of women. Her excuse for such forwardness was in these words: "It may be thought strange, sir, that we show ourselves here; but I pray you remember that Christ purchased us at as dear a rate as our brother men, and He requireth the same obedience from us." It was a great day for missions when the good women of our churches banded themselves together in answer to the cry for help from the Zenanas in far-distant lands. It was a great day for the temperance reform when the women marched about the streets of the Ohio towns in a crusade against the dram-shops, giving rise to that splendid organization, the Women's Christian Temperance Union. It will surely prove to have been a great day for the Sabbath reform when the women came together in this Sabbath Alliance.

God bless these ministering women and enable them in co-operation in other kindred organizations, to arrest the desecration of the American Sabbath and to give a new significance to that rich promise: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth."

## THE PURPLE CUP.

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."—MATT. xxvi. 39.

It was the last night of our Lord's ministry on earth—"that dark, that doleful night, when powers of earth and hell arose against the Son of God's delight." The last interview in the upper chamber was over ; the benediction pronounced, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ; the farewell said, "Arise, let us go hence." They came down the outer stairway and passed along the silent street—one after another of the disciples leaving the little company, until three only were left with Jesus—out through the gateway across the ford of the Kidron, upward along the slope of Olivet until they reached Gethsemane. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," said the Master ; "tarry ye here and watch, while I go yonder." He must needs be alone in his great agony : for this is that knight-errant who was seen approaching on the hills of Edom with garments dyed in the treading of the wine-press. Being a man, he longed for sympathy ; wherefore he said, "Tarry ye here and watch." In an hour like that there is inexpressible strength in

the mere thought of the near presence of another man. Nay, in most lives there are seasons of such extreme loneliness that comfort comes from the sound of a dog's feet pattering along the dark path beside us.

The garden here referred to is about one-half mile out from Jerusalem. It is an enclosure of perhaps seventy paces around. Its general features are the same as nineteen hundred years ago; the larger part of the olive grove, however, was cut down by Titus in the siege of Jerusalem; there are still eight gnarled and twisted giants, under whose shadow travellers sit and recall the story of the Lord's passion. To the west lies the Holy City, just beyond the dark ravine through which the brook Kidron goes rippling on to the Dead Sea. The garden is now in charge of a brotherhood of Franciscan monks, who, from their flower garden, will pluck for you, for a franc, a bunch of roses red as blood.

Let us go and stand at the gateway of this garden. Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Our Lord is agonizing in prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"—as if a stern hand were actually pressing to his lips a goblet, from which he shrank with fear and trembling. Let us gaze upon this purple cup. We may not fathom its full meaning, for it suggests truths which stretch far beyond all human gaze. It is like the legendary ring, which lay upon the ground inviting a child's hand to lift it; but if you tried, lo! it was not a ring, but the first link of a chain that girdled the earth.

I. *We are standing here face to face with the mystery of pain.* The cry of the Master is one wave of

the boundless sea of sorrows ever sobbing on the shore of human life. Hallam says, "The deepest thing in human experience is pain." It is indeed a great mystery. At this moment there are thousands languishing on beds of fever, little children whose limbs are twisted with anguish, men and women groaning and shrieking. Why must this be? It is the common lot. These are the ills that flesh is heir to. Our Lord would not have been a perfect man had he not entered into this common lot. He took not on him the nature of angels, but of men. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

We may not understand the mystery, but we can get a mighty strength and consolation from the thought that the captain of our salvation, having himself suffered, can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He is able to sympathize with us. When Lord Nelson was wounded at the battle of the Nile, they carried him below to the cock-pit, and the surgeons, who were ministering to the other wounded, at once left the decks and came to him. He said, "Go to your work; I'll take my turn with my brave fellows." So it was with Jesus; he took his turn with us.

" . . . O Christ, come tenderly,  
By thy forsaken sonship in the red  
Wine-press; by the wilderness outspread,  
And the lone garden where thine agony  
Fell bloody from thy brow—by all those  
Permitted desolations, comfort mine!"

II. *We are facing, also, the great problem of temptation.* Here, too, is mystery. It is suggested to those who are just now concerned in the vain investigation of psychic force and psychic phenomena, that they explain, if possible, the influence of the unseen power of evil on human souls—the leering devil, the “toad squat at the ear of Eve.” That were difficult enough ; but here is a greater problem still : How could he be tempted, in whom there was no evil ? How could there be a hand-clasp, when the hand that was reached out of the darkness found naught to meet it ?

Our Lord, on leaving the upper chamber, said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” It is a mistake to think that his temptation was limited to the forty days in the wilderness ; all along the way the adversary beset him, ever seeking to allure him from the pathway leading to the cross.

The sorest temptation that ever comes to man, is not that which seduces him into a common vice, but rather that which moves him to shirk his duty. It is so easy to yield, and so fatal. At this point also our Lord is our brother, “For in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” He reached the uttermost limit. The question presented to him by the adversary was whether he would please himself or, by the anguish of the cross, save the world. It was the same question that comes to the engineer when he sees that the bridge has gone down and scores of lives depend upon his faithfulness ; shall he leap, or stand at his post ? It is the same that comes to the captain when his ship is reeling, and the passengers are crying for help, and the life-boat is launched ; shall he betake



himself to the boat, or stand at his post looking to the safety of all? It is the same that comes to every man: "Shall I look to my own comfort, shall I live for self-pleasing and self-aggrandizement, or shall I hearken to the universal need and do my utmost to relieve it?"

In the hour of that fierce Waterloo when the worse contends with the better reason, the higher nature against the lower, love against selfishness, lo! there is a mighty helper who stands by. The thing that amazed the king of Babylon when he looked into the fiery furnace and saw beside the three brave youths a fourth figure like unto the Son of God, is ever happening. Here is the promise: "When thou goest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

III. *In this cup was, also, the bitterness of death.* O grim monster, who does not fear thee? The cold embrace, the fluttering pulse, the dimming eye. The followers of Mohammed are fond of claiming an utter fearlessness of death, holding that a man's time is written on his forehead, and there is no power that can resist it. Yet when the plague broke out at Medina, and when the priests were fleeing, they excused themselves by saying, "It is true that Allah has ordained death, but owing to our unworthiness we feel moved to decline the divine dispensation." Our Lord being a perfect man and in all points such as we are, was moved by this common fear. He foresaw moreover, the bitter accessories of his death;

the treachery, the loneliness, the cross, the nails, the long hours of fever, the gangrene, the breaking heart. Was it strange that he dreaded it?

It is a comfort to feel that even in this weakness of fear he can sympathize with us. It is an added comfort to know that, in our death his companionship will be our strong support. How many a soul has passed along the journey saying, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." By his death our death is robbed of its chiefest pain. As Queen Eleanor, when her royal husband had been pierced by a poisoned arrow, sucked the virus from the wound, so, since Jesus drank this cup, death can never be the same to us. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But there was *something more* than death in this cup; or else many a martyr has faced his last agony more heroically than this Son of Man. John Bradford, embracing the stake, said, "I go in a chariot of fire, to have supper with my Lord to-night." Alice Driver, kissing a chain about her neck, "This is a goodly neckerchief; the Lord be praised for it!" Castilia Rupea, who was hurled from a precipice, cried 'out, "Ye throw my body from the steep hill, but my soul shall mount up on eagle's wings!" Dr. Taylor, on his way to die at Hadley, said exultingly, "There are but two more stiles, and I shall be at my Father's house." Latimer, when the fagots were kindled about him, said to his comrade at the neighboring stake, "Be of good cheer; we light a candle this day in England, which shall never be extin-

guished." O what multitudes have looked death in the face—death under the gleaming axe, death in the arena, death among the fagots, death with all the tortures that fiendish ingenuity could devise—smiling, exulting, singing *Te Deums*; and Jesus of Nazareth was the bravest of men. There must have been something more than death, then, in this cup. What was it?

IV. *The world's sin.* The two darkest, bitterest experiences in the history of a human soul are conviction of sin and retribution; both of these, in a sense, came to him who became our substitute before the offended law.

1. *Conviction of sin.* Was Christ a sinner then? No and yes. Of all who ever lived on earth he was the only guiltless one. There was no guile in his heart, no guile in his lips. But he took our place, and in doing so he must have changed places with us in such a way as to enter into our very consciousness. If he was to suffer for our sins, he must in a sense feel them as his own. Thus it is written, "He that knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The pain of the publican who beat upon his breast, crying, "God be merciful"; the pain of the prodigal son as he sat in the swine field, realizing in rags and poverty his unspeakable loss; the pain of Bunyan, who, as he walked through the forest with a certain fearful looking for of judgment, envied, as he says, the very owls and toads; the pain of all who have ever felt themselves to have passed justly under the wrath of a holy God; all this was in the cup which, in behalf of the ruined race, was pressed to Jesus' lips. It must have been to his own consciousness as if he, the

absolutely sinless one, had committed all the thefts and murders and adulteries and unspeakable blasphemies, that had ever been laid to his people's charge. Oh, what a world of anguish was laid upon the heart of this Atlas, who thus identified himself with us !

2. *Experience of retribution.* Our Lord had not fully discharged his vicarious office until he assumed the full penalty of our sin ; so it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." In view of this fact there is an awful significance in the statement of the historic creed of the universal Church, "He descended into hell for us." The worm of remorse that gnaws and never dies, the fire of despair that burns and is never quenched, the outer darkness of divine abandonment, he knew them all. Little wonder that his frame shook and trembled, or that the sweat of agony stood like blood drops on his brow, when this cup was pressed to his lips.

" O Christ, what burdens bowed thy head !

Our load was laid on thee ;

Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,

Didst bear all ill for me.

Death and the curse were in our cup ;

O Christ, 'twas full for thee !

But thou hast drained the last dark drop ;

'Tis empty now for me.

That bitter cup, love drank it up ;

Now blessing's draught for me ! "

*Here then is the antidote for death.* To receive Christ by faith is to consent that he shall thus stand in our place before the offended law. In this case our guilt is expiated in him and we go free. "He that believeth shall be saved." And, being saved by this free grace

of Christ, what remains for us but to live for him? At the beginning of our Civil War in the little town of Yadkin there was a collision of the skirmish lines. The negroes, hiding in the swamps and behind the fences, saw here and there the puffs of smoke, and knew that this was a part of a mighty conflict in which were involved their hopes of manhood and freedom. The next morning an old colored preacher, coming out of hiding, saw lying in the road a dead man, his hands clutching the earth, his blue coat stained with his life-blood. He went back and brought with him a little company of the refugees, and they scooped out a shallow grave beside the road and buried this man, who, they felt, had suffered and died in their behalf. To-day a church stands over that mound and the negroes assemble there to render praises to God. Oh, what do we owe to him who by his death on Calvary delivered us from eternal shame and sorrow! "What shall I render unto him for all his loving kindness? I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord."

*Here, also, is the secret of life.* Life is character. Character begins when a man's will is subjected to the divine will. To every one of us comes sooner or later the struggle of Gethsemane. It is a conflict of wills. I want to have my way; God wants to have his way with me. As his child I have power to defy him, but that way lies death. The turning point of life, the crisis of the battle, is when you or I can say, "O my Father, not my will but thine be done!" This marks the entrance of the higher life.

It is written that when the anguish of Gethsemane was over, an angel came and ministered to Christ. He needed help; his form was bowed, his face bore

the marks of his terrific struggle. A gleam as of a star falling, and lo ! an angel bent over him. And something like this comes to all who end the conflict by yielding a complete and final acquiescence in the divine will. Our Lord himself, kinder than any angel, bends down to say, "Thou hast fought a good fight. Thou art my younger brother in the glory of the better life." And thenceforth we are no longer our own ; our lives are hid with Christ in God.

## DISABLED BY UNBELIEF.

“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”—HEB. iii. 19.

The children of Israel are frequently spoken of in Scripture as a stiff-necked people—“A perverse and stiff-necked people.” Why? Because they were so slow to learn the simple lesson, “I am the Lord thy God.”

To teach this lesson was the prime purpose of the wonders that were wrought on that Passover night when the Israelites were delivered out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of their bondage. They had been told of a land flowing with milk and honey; the arm of the Lord, made bare in their behalf in the terrible plague, was to lead them thither. No more toiling in the brick yards, no more cringing under the whip of scorpions; rest, green pastures, milk and honey; these were the pleasures to which they were looking forward when, girdled and sandalled and leaning on their staves, they waited for the signal on that dreadful night. It came at length, the awful crescendo of woe, and forth they marched under the blood-stained lintels of their doors.

It was only a ten days' journey from Rameses to the foot hills of Canaan. Ten days and their troubles would be over. Alas! had they only known. The ten days were to stretch out into forty years of wan-

dering, with Canaan almost in sight. So near and yet so far! And all because of their unbelief; for they could not enter in until they had learned this lesson, "I am the Lord thy God."

It was three days only after their departure when they encamped at Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and the sea, with the mountains on either side. They heard the sound of horses' hoofs afar off, and the cry was raised that Pharaoh and his host were pursuing them. Smitten with sudden fear, they began to complain of their folly in leaving Egypt. Here they were, caught in a trap and doomed to death. What should they do? It seems not to have occurred to them that the Lord was their God. Stand still and see his salvation! The waves rolled back to make a way of escape, and all night long, over the stones slippery with seaweed, they fled before the rumbling of the chariot wheels. Not one was lost. On the further side of the sea they heard, in the deep darkness, the rolling back of the waters, the neighing of horses and the shrill cries of struggling men. The day broke; the chariot wheels and corpses of Pharaoh's men came floating to the shore. The song was raised, "Who is like unto our God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!" Now surely they had learned their lesson. Never more could they forget that the Lord was their God.

Not long after, they pitched their tents under the shadow of Sinai. Never in all the course of history, save at Golgotha, have there been such manifestations of a present Deity as at that flaming mount: the earth quaked and trembled, clouds gathered about the summit and their blackness was rent by vivid lightning; the sound of a trumpet was heard waxing



louder and louder. But despite these awful phenomena, the people soon betrayed their utter unbelief: "Up, make us gods!" they cried. They reared the golden calf and danced about it in unholy orgies. These be your gods, O Israel! The sacred bull of Egypt, associated with all the sorrows of their bitter bondage, was more to them than Jehovah, who had borne them upon his providence as on eagle's wings.

It was the summer after the exodus when they found themselves at Kadesh-Barnea, on the very borders of the promised land. Off yonder were its green mountain slopes; naught was needed but that they should go in and take possession, but they hesitated. Who knew what dangers might await them? Spies were sent to search out the land. They returned presently, bringing with them grapes and pomegranates and other rich products of the country but saying, "There are giants in the land and we were in their sight but as grasshoppers." Then the voice of wailing, "Why did we ever come out of Egypt? Far better to have remained in bondage with our simple meal of leeks and lentils, than to have come forth to face this certainty of death." Where was their confidence in God? The great lesson was still unlearned. Whipped on by unbelief, they must still go round about by the way of the wilderness until they shall learn that the Lord is God.

Now thirty-eight years have passed and gone; they are on the borders of Canaan. All along their journey they have been led by the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Not once has God forsaken them. Yet, under a momentary trial, they again give way to murmuring. The fiery serpents run

through the camp, hissing and stinging. The brazen serpent is upreared and the word goes forth, "Look and live!" They are saved, but not yet convinced. They cannot enter in because of unbelief. Verily, they are a perverse and stiff-necked people.

We are all alike; there is no difference. We differ as to our darling sins, but back of them all lies unbelief. This is the head and front of all our offending. Oh, how many lands of promise we are prevented from entering by our unbelief! Why is it that all are not partakers of the rich inheritance of the gospel of Christ? Because of unbelief; for it is written, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

The universal query is this: "What shall I do to be saved?" But back of that is another: "What has God done to save me?" A mother with her little child crossing an arm of the Syrian desert saw in the distance the dreadful token of an approaching sand storm,—the yellow haze, the low hissing. She began to run with all speed, but soon perceived that the simoom must overtake her. She hastily scooped out a hole in the sand, into it she placed her child, and threw herself over it. The storm swept past; the mother died, but the child was saved. This is the story of the cross. One died for all because all were under sentence of death, that we might be saved through him. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed. Now returns the question, "What must I do?" And the answer is, "Believe, only believe!"

(1) *We are commanded so to do.* "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He

that believeth and is baptized " (that is, makes confession of his faith, because with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation) " shall be saved ; and he that believeth not shall be damned." " I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." " He that believeth on the Son is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." It will probably be conceded on all sides that, inasmuch as salvation is of free grace, God has the right to affix to it any condition which might please him. This is the sole condition—to believe in the only begotten Son of God.

(2) *To believe is necessary in the nature of the case.* We, being made in the divine likeness, are possessed of sovereign wills and God cannot force his grace upon us. If he constrains us, it must be with the "cords of a man." He did not force the children of Israel to partake of the manna which he gave. It lay upon the ground plenteous as hoar frost ; it was free, absolutely free ; and there was enough for all. But a man might walk through the camp with manna lying thick on all sides of him, and yet die of starvation, if he would not stoop down and take of it. Faith is not mere intellectual assent to a fact. It is appropriation. It is the hand stretched forth. It is receiving Christ so that he becomes ours, his life blending with our lives forevermore.

(3) *It is possible for all to believe in Christ.* Indeed it would be difficult to conceive of any other condition which would have placed the divine grace within

the reach of all. God might have required us to stand like St. Simeon Stylites upon a pillar under the suns of summer and the storms of winter for weary years, bound with a chain like his, twenty cubits long. Or he might have commanded us to journey to some distant shrine, as the Moslems do to the black stone of the Caaba. And it is safe to say that if such injunctions had been sealed with an unmistakable sanction, we would all be inclined to obey them ; for eternal life, even at such a cost, would be cheaply bought. But it has pleased God instead to make the way plain and easy for all. Only believe. The living bread is without price, we need only to take and eat it.

What then ? How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? So free, so bountiful, so glorious ! Let us learn the lesson of the wedding garment : A certain king made a marriage supper for his son ; he provided a rich wardrobe in which were suitable garments for all who were invited to the feast. When all were come together, he went in and out among the guests, and lo ! here was one who had not on a wedding garment. " Friend, how camest thou in hither in this guise ? " And he had nothing to say. Speechless ! Why ? Because there was nothing that could be said. " Cast him forth into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth " ; where men curse their unspeakable folly, in rejecting the great blessing which was to be had for the mere taking. It was free and nigh, and they would not have it.

But the lesson here is not for the impenitent alone. We, who profess to follow Jesus, fall far short, by reason of our measure of unbelief, of the higher life.

It is a great thing to be saved from hell ; but this is only the beginning of salvation. Salvation is a vast word, and has in it all the treasures of the Christian life. There are maximum Christians, and there are minimum Christians, and we may be whatever we will. Lot was a good man, but he pitched his tent too near the gates of Sodom ; and when the message came, "Fly for your life ; look not behind you !" he betook himself to the mountains. When he passed through the gateway of little Zoar, he was a bereaved and poverty-stricken man. He had lost all ; herds, flocks, beloved wife, earthly possessions, and was saved so as by fire. We may be saved in like manner ; or, if we choose, we may have ministered unto us an abundant entrance into the celestial city. There are vast possibilities in the Christian life. God help us so to believe that we may attain unto them.

Look now at the sad disabilities brought upon us by our unbelief.

(1) *By our unbelief we are excluded from the promised land of peace.* This is the inheritance which our master intended for us : "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And we go on singing :

"When thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come  
To take thy ransomed people home,  
Shall I among them stand ?  
Shall such a worthless worm as I,  
Who sometimes am afraid to die,  
Be found at thy right hand ?"

Why do we not take him at his word ? Are you saved ? "I hope so." Hope so ! Why do you not believe it ? Did not the Lord say that when you had

placed yourself in his charge, no man should pluck you out of his hand? Did he not say, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end"? Is it not true, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"? Does this mean nothing, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Have you repented? Have you believed? Have you been baptized? If not, get down on your knees and "do the first works." But if you have already committed yourself to Christ and for Christ, then take the Master at his word and rest in him.

On that night when Jesus came walking to his disciples on the sea, Peter was moved to say, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." And the Master said, "Come." He set out bravely, but looking on the yawning billows, he began to sink, and cried, "Lord, save me!" The hand was stretched out and then the reproving word, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Do we covet the calm self-poise of Jesus? Do we long for that peace which moves above all the raging waves of doubt and worry? Then let us believe. Doubt cuts the sinews of our strength. Doubt clips our wings and leaves us to flutter near the earth, like wounded birds that should soar aloft and sing.

(2) *By our unbelief we are excluded from the promised land of character.* What is character? Christ-likeness. And how is it attained? By the imitation of Christ. We profess to believe in him as the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. He is that perfect ideal of manhood in whom are manifest all the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace,

long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, truth. If we so believe in him, we shall be ever following in his footsteps. The world expects to see in us a reflection of the perfections of our Lord. It is a reasonable requirement. The measure of our attainment unto this Christ-likeness will be precisely the measure of our faith. "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

(3) *By our measure of unbelief we are shut out from the Canaan of power and usefulness.* At the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration the disciples were put to shame because they were unable to heal the demoniac boy. The Lord came down out of the mountain and into their midst, his face shining, and looking round upon his disciples he said, "O ye faithless ones, how long shall I bear with you?" Afterwards when they asked him, "Why could not we heal the lad?" he answered, "Because of your unbelief." Then, as they continued their journey, he said unto them, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." A grain of mustard seed was the symbol of littleness, but the mustard seed had in it the power of life. The lifting of a mountain was the symbol of impossibility, but all things are possible to him who believes. This is not rhetoric; not hyperbole; it is truth. If our faith were perfect, it would always be buttressed by the omnipotence of God.

We are appointed to a great work, the work of the kingdom of truth and righteousness. Do we believe in our divine appointment to that work, and have we an unwavering faith in its ultimate success? On Monday, September the tenth, 1807, a great crowd was assembled on the wharf in Albany to witness the trial trip of Robert Fulton's boat, the Clermont. They called it "Fulton's Folly." He says that on that day he heard many "sarcastic remarks." They were making great sport of him. But presently clouds of steam and smoke puffed from her smoke-stacks, the spray began to fly from her paddle-wheels and the first steamboat of history moved out into the river. Then the laughter ceased; and as the Clermont moved down the Hudson, her builder, standing on her deck, smiled as in the distance he heard the sound of cheering. The secret of his success lay in a profound belief in his work. He knew that right principles were involved in the machinery of the Clermont. This is the faith that ever wins. Our work is the bringing of the nations to the knowledge of Christ. O for a larger faith in the outcome; the outcome which rests upon the veracity of the living God! Let us believe that the ships of Tarshish will come from afar, the rams of Nebaioth and the dromedaries of Midian, and that all the nations shall render obeisance to our Lord. Believing, we shall lend a hand, and our lives will tell to the glory of God.

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? "Only believe!" We enter the kingdom by faith. We walk by faith. The just shall live by faith. All things are possible to him that believeth. "He came



unto his own and his own received him not ; but to as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God ; even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

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## THE STORY OF THREE WOULD-BE DISCIPLES.

“And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”—LUKE ix. 57-62.

Down from the north came James I. to take the English crown. He was gorgeously arrayed and the horse upon which he rode was gaily caparisoned. With him rode a considerable company of enthusiastic friends and partisans. At frequent intervals he paused to address admiring crowds of rustics drawn up along the way. Here and there, being in a most kindly humor, he was pleased to lay his sword on the shoulder of a country squire and bid him rise a belted knight. The days were spent in pleasant converse, the nights in revelry. So with much pomp and circumstance the retinue came at length to London town. Then the king, amid enthusiastic greetings and acclamations, proceeded to Westminster where the sceptre and the anointing oil awaited him.

Down from the north came another king to claim his own,—the King of Kings and Lords of Lords,

though wearing a disguise of flesh. He was clad in homespun and journeyed afoot. No enthusiastic crowds attended him ; only a little group of fishermen and other toilers, humble, unlettered, unnoticed by the world. Day after day he trudged wearily on, pausing only to preach the unsearchable riches of the kingdom or to work miracles of kindness; at night, dusty and worn, he rested under the canopy of heaven. He had "set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem" to a crown of thorns, a baptism of blood. He knew what awaited him;—the treachery, the loneliness, the nails, the fever, the death anguish, the heart-break. Yet he went on. What volumes of heroism are in that word "steadfastly." It would appear that he was inspired, almost transfigured, by the anticipation of his sacrifice ; for it is written that as they journeyed his disciples "feared," "wondered," "were amazed."

Not a few of the pilgrims, who were at this time journeying to Jerusalem to attend the passover feast, fell in with this little company, and, impressed by the majesty of Jesus' work and teaching, were moved to follow him. Among those who thus presented themselves were three aspirants, who received special mention probably because they were generic types. All three expressed a desire to become his disciples, but we know not that any one of them ultimately followed him.

The Lord wanted friends and adherents. He had come the long journey from heaven, to win souls from the pursuit of temporal things to the higher life. But there must be no misunderstanding ; he would make no alluring promises, to be followed by disappointment. When Mohammed was pushing his victorious campaign, he recruited his army by giving

assurance of all kinds of honors and emoluments here, or, in case of death in battle, a sensuous heaven, with gardens and fountains and wine and houris and an eternity of luxurious ease. Not so our Saviour. He made a frank presentment of the case, saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." And again, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

*The first* of these aspirants for discipleship may be characterized as *the impulsive man*. "Lord, I will follow thee," he cried, "whithersoever thou goest." He had seen Christ's miracles, had heard his discourses, had marked the unmistakable tokens of Messianic dignity in him and could not restrain himself; "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." And whither was that? To circles of influence, to splendid victories over his adversaries, to a glorious reign in Jerusalem? Nay. Let him know the truth. This Christ was going to self-denial, to suffering, to the sacrifice of the cross. The man's bright dreams are all illusive. One word will dash them: "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

It was as if the Lord had said, "Nay; stop and think. Do nothing hastily, ponder it well, first count the cost, and then come." The first and greatest duty of every man is *to think* on the great problems that reach forth into the endless life. If amid the care and hurry of earthly pursuits we would only turn aside to think, to ponder on the great verities,

we should all perforce cast in our lot with the followers of Christ. In the second century the pagan philosopher Athenagoras was moved to write a philippic against the Christian religion. "But," said he, "I will know the facts to begin with." He looked into the face of Jesus; and its beauty grew upon him more and more until it seemed the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. In vain did he seek for a joint in the harness of Christ's character. His works were all kindness, his discourses were all truth. As he looked upon him, he also "feared," "wondered," "was amazed"; and he concluded by writing an elaborate and convincing defence of the religion of the prophet of Nazareth. If the multitudes who are wont to regard Jesus as a root out of a dry ground without form or comeliness, would do likewise, they also would end by loving and serving him.

No sooner do we begin to consider frankly the gospel, than we find ourselves face to face with three things: (1) *A mighty claim.* A claim which at the outset seems preposterous; for this Jesus of Nazareth sets himself up as the veritable Son of God. He professes to be the fulfiller of all those prophecies of the old economy which pointed forward to the incarnation of Deity; such as, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us"; and, "He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." He presents himself to us as that Word which was in the beginning with God and which was God and of whom it is written, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory of the

only begotten of the Father." He alone is Theanthropos, the God-man. Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in flesh. This claim must either be allowed or denied ; there is no middle course. If it be denied, then Jesus must be denounced as an impostor. If it be allowed, then we must of necessity bow down before him, saying, "My Lord and my God." (2) *An eternal issue.* Here is the sealing of our destiny. This Jesus came into the world to suffer and to die for sinners ; "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and by his stripes we are healed." "He that believeth shall be saved ; he that believeth not, shall be damned." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; he that believeth not, is condemned already ; the wrath of God abideth upon him." If these things are so, the cross stands at the parting of the ways. Yonder is the broad way leading out into the endless night, and here is the narrow way along which pass the multitude in white robes, washed in his blood, sinners saved by grace, toward the open gates of heaven and the endless day. To deny Christ, therefore, is the unpardonable sin because it closes the only door of escape from death. The question, therefore, is one of supreme moment to every man. (3) *A tremendous venture.* To follow Christ means the consecration of everything to him. Let a man ponder well, act with deliberation, and yet make no delay. In financial circles it is the custom for men, who invest in one speculation, to "hedge" by investing in others also, so that everything may not be lost in case of reverse. But there is no hedging in this matter. A wise ship-owner will never put all his wealth into a single vessel, but divides it among several,

so that if one cargo is lost in shipwreck, he may still have something left. But there is no reserve in this matter. I know a man who, being interested in a Colorado mine, tried to save his investment by putting in more and more until all his possessions were involved. And when the calamity came, he spoke of himself as a fool for thus risking all in one venture. Paul, also, called himself a fool for Jesus' sake in that he had given up all for him. In fact, however, this was no venture, this was no speculation, but a very surety. "No man," said the Master, "hath given up aught for my sake and the gospel's, but that he shall receive an hundred-fold in this present time and in the time to come life everlasting."

These are some of the things for impulsive people to ponder well. Let it be remembered, however, that thinking does not involve protracted delay. The interests involved are such that our deliberations should bring us to a speedy conclusion. He that had not where to lay his head calls us to enter into fellowship with him in devotion to truth and righteousness. The only question is whether his demand is right and reasonable; that being ascertained, the part of a true man is forthwith to comply with it.

*The second* of the aspirants for discipleship was the *dilatory man*. He had met with bereavement and his face bore the traces of sorrow. The Lord saw that face and had compassion, saying in himself "This man is under a burden; my gospel will help him to bear it." Therefore, he took the initiative and said to him, "Come and follow me." Just as he has done with us perhaps, speaking to us with a still, small voice when we were lying on a bed of languishing or sore-hearted under affliction, saying, "Come,

and I will give you rest." And this man answered what? "I will follow thee, but let me first go and bury my father."

Aye, there's the trouble. We are all hoping to follow Christ, but must "first" do this or first do that; but the Master knows no first but this, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

But was it not hard that this man could not go and bury his father? To do that was, as we say, paying a debt of nature. Yes, but the Master's call suggested a debt of grace, which was far greater. Wherefore he said, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the gospel." Let those who are in the bonds of nature discharge the debts of nature. The greater must ever overtop the less. Had this man attended to the obsequies of his father according to the Jewish custom, it would have meant seven days of wailing; meanwhile Jesus was journeying on.

We are all coming;—all meaning to come to Christ, but not just now. We can hear the voice of the mother at the foot of the stairs in the old home, calling to us in the early morning to come. The chores must be done, the breakfast was ready, it was time to be thinking of the satchel and the school. "Children, come!" And from our beds we answered, "Coming!" and said within ourselves, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," till from the foot of the stairs came another, the father's voice this time, calling, "Come now!" and there was authority in it. So is the voice of the great Father, "Come now!"

But why come *now*? For these reasons. (1) *Christ is passing by*. He does not linger. He is ever on a journey. We hear his footsteps coming near, as



Bartimæus at the gate of Jericho heard them, and his voice as he bends over us, "Arise and follow me." Already he is going, the voice grows fainter, the footsteps are almost hushed ; the conscience that troubled us once, troubles us no more ; no more longings and aspirations ; less and less of the fearful looking for of judgment ; more and more of content with the beggarly elements of this world. The sound of the footsteps is hushed ; Jesus of Nazareth has passed by.

(2) *The work commands* ; the work which is appointed to you and me. God is busy ; as the Master said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." What is he doing ? Saving the world. And in this great work he has appointed you and me a part. "Why stand ye idle all the day ? Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they are white already for the harvest. Thrust in the sickle and reap. Go work to-day." In a corner of the field where the harvest is plenteous, there is a place unreaped ; unreaped, because my sickle is not there. God's temple is rising ; a great multitude of his people are laying stone upon stone ; but there is one place in the wall which remains unbuilt ; a trowel is there unused because your hand has not grasped it. The army of the cross goes marching on, conquering and to conquer ; in the great roster there is a place for a name, but no name there ; it was left for you and still you hesitate. Every moment of delay means something undone that should be done ; a command unheeded, a call rejected, an opportunity despised, a debt protested and unpaid.

(3) *The sands are falling in the hour-glass.* Life is but an handbreadth, an arrow speeding to its mark, a swift ship, an eagle hastening to its prey, a tale told. So teach us to number our

days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. To-day if ye will hear his voice ! In the company of the French literati there is no name more brilliant than Guy de Maupassant, prematurely dead. Owing to the disreputable character of his productions, the French Academy had refused to affix its imprimatur to his work. He said, "The Academy would condemn me to virtue, but there is plenty of time for virtue." The words had scarcely passed from his lips before he was seized with that melancholy madness which ended his life. No, no; if we have work to do, now is the time to attend to it. Time and tide wait for no man. Let us be wise to-day.

*The third aspirant was the double-minded man.* He said, "I will follow thee, Lord, but suffer me first to say farewell to those at home." A reasonable request surely. Home, the dear mother's face, all the sweet associations of the domestic circle. What harm in going back to say farewell? But there is never a conflict of duties and duty never waits on comfort or convenience. "If a man love home, kindred, friends better than me, he cannot be my disciple." Wherefore, the Lord replied, "He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom." There is no room for a divided service. The oriental plough was merely a crooked stick sharpened at the share. A man must guide it carefully and give all attention to his task, or else he would make a zig-zag furrow—just such a furrow as the double-minded man always makes of his life.

Let it be observed, (1) *that the supreme consideration always is duty.* Duty is debt, the very same word; but duty is above all other debts in that it is an obligation owed to God. Duty means life, character,

usefulness, eternal peace. All else dwindles in comparison with it. Let it be observed also (2) *that the only way to enter upon this life of duty is by complete surrender to it.* At the siege of Fort Donaldson, when General Buckner proposed an armistice, General Grant replied, "There is no reason for an armistice. I propose to move immediately upon your works; my terms are unconditional surrender." Unconditional surrender; time, talents, possessions, energy, everything. God bids us lay them down before his altar a living sacrifice.

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave and follow thee."

And observe still further that having entered upon this life of duty, (3) *there must be no looking back.* Our faces must be set as steadfastly as the face of Jesus, toward the responsibilities before us. Remember Lot's wife. Curiously enough it was this very longing to say farewell to home that ruined her. What harm in one backward glance? But the word was, "Flee for your life, escape to the mountains, look not behind you." The pilgrim who fled from the City of Destruction, thrust his fingers into his ears and cried as he ran, "Life! Life! Eternal life!" If we would make a success of our holy endeavor, good friends, let us take leave of sin and selfishness. Laying aside all encumbering weights and everything that hinders, let us reach forth unto the things that are before, looking unto Jesus. This one thing I do.

The curtain falls upon the story of these aspirants. We have no means of knowing what became of them. But there were others who, with an undivided heart, went following after Christ. There were those humble fishermen, John and James and Peter and

the others, who had left their nets and boats and all. "And what shall we receive?" asked they. "An hundredfold here," he answered, "and in the time to come life everlasting." It may be that we shall see them presently in the streets of the heavenly city, and if we ask them whether they regret the sacrifice they made for Jesus' sake, what will they answer? What can they answer in that land where gold is no more than the pavement of the streets, and God is light, and righteousness is the meat and drink of all the immortals? In the church of San Stephano at Rome there is a series of panels representing the deaths of the apostles. Here is James bowing his head under the gleaming axe; here is Peter head downward on the cross; here is another being cast in a caldron of boiling oil; and there a fourth facing the lions. And this was what they received for their surrender of all? Nay, not this. The milk and honey lie beyond the wilderness. Life everlasting! Heaven is full of those who have come up out of the great tribulation and among them all there is not one who regrets his choice; nor is there one here upon the earth who has entered into the full fellowship of the service of Christ, who does not sing with heart and understanding,

" O happy day, that fixed my choice  
On thee, my Saviour and my God."

## BY THE BROOK IN THE GORGE.

"Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan."—I. KINGS xvii. 3.

The time of our narrative is the darkest hour in the history of Israel. Ahab was on the throne; a man of brutal instincts and under the capricious domination of a strong-minded woman, whose name is a synonym for all that is base and unwomanly. She was the daughter of a pagan priest and had introduced the worship of the Phœnician gods. On all the hill-tops were the altars of Baal and the unclean Ashtoreth. Clouds and darkness covered the land. The people forgot the Lord who had delivered them out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage; and they were given over to their own foolish imaginations.

On a sudden, from the distant mountains of Gilead came Elijah, a son of the desert, nourished amid the rocks and tempests. His appearance was like that of a meteor in the night.

"He stood in Ahab's ivory hall;  
His cloak the skin of mountain goat, his robe a mohair pall.  
His garb around his sinewy loins a rawhide belt confined;  
His hair and beard, like raven plumes, streamed dark along  
the wind.  
A strong acacia's spiky stem, scarce smoothed, was in his  
hand;  
His feet were fleshless, callous, bare, and tawny as the sand;

His brow, a soaring crag, o'erhung his swart and shaggy chest,  
And 'neath its shades his eyes gleamed keen as eagles' from their nest."

As he stood at the threshold of the palace, his words were few: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, there shall be no rain nor dew, but according to my word!"

In the confusion of the startled court he escaped, no one knew whither. The king and his attendants were left trembling at the awful, almost forgotten name, "The Lord God of Israel." But why should they heed the maundering of a mad hermit? No dew nor rain forsooth but according to his word! These are foolish fears. But that night no dew fell, and the next day it did not rain. Days and nights came and went, and there was neither rain nor dew. The clouds swept over, barren and dry as fleece. The fields were burnt; the herds and flocks went lowing and bleating in vain for water. The brooks murmured lower and lower to their pebbly beds. No rain! no dew! The scourge was on them like a fever now; the heavens were as brass; the wind swept by in furious gusts. Men and women, gaunt and hollow-eyed, reminded each other of the hermit's word. A year went by. Two years. Three years. No rain! no dew!

In the meantime, what had become of Elijah? He had taken refuge by the brook of the gorge. On every side the mountains shut him in. Here in the solitude he was left to find tongues in trees, sermons in stones, books in the running brooks. No sound but the scream of the eagle wheeling on poised wings to its eyrie, or the rattling of stones along the mountain side, loosed by the foot of the wild goat, or the

murmur of the brook. There are so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

But *why should this man have been secluded at an hour so critical*,—this man who alone could have lifted a voice of stern rebuke, who alone had the courage to tear down the high places and scatter the altar fires of Baal?

I. *God had placed the prophet here because He would take care of him and preserve him for usefulness farther on.* He was sheltered here as securely as in the hollow of God's hand. In vain did Ahab send out his spies, bidding them go find the man that troubled Israel. Up and down the land they sought for Elijah, but found him not.

In 1755, in the battle in which General Braddock was defeated and mortally wounded, after five horses had been shot under him, when sixty-three out of eighty-six English officers were killed and more than one-half of the rank and file left dead upon the field, there was one young officer who seemed to have a charmed life. A savage, who was afterwards captured, said that he had aimed at this young Lieutenant no less than seventeen times without effect, "But," he added, "the Great Spirit protected him." This young man was George Washington, for whom a glorious work was waiting, and it was true that God held him in His protecting care. And this is but the statement of the general law, that a man is immortal till his work is done.

The man who sat beside the brook Cherith had two firm friends to bear him company. One was a *good conscience*. What are all the whips and scorns of time? What are all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune? What are all the ills that human

flesh is heir to, if a man can say, "I know that I am doing right"? And his other friend was *an acquiescent will*, a readiness to mingle in the open conflict or to abide in solitude just as his Master pleased.

On the public green at New Haven are three inconspicuous graves where lie the bodies of Goffe, Whalley and Dixwell, the regicides who, obeying the dictates of conscience, sentenced Charles I. to death. For this, in the time of the Restoration, they were driven beyond the sea and hunted like partridges over the hills. They lived in disguise and under assumed names, bearing about with them, for their comfort, only the strong assurance that they had done their duty, until one by one they were buried in these humble graves. But a mile away there is another spot that tells the story of their fearless faith,—a cave on West Rock where these men spent days and nights in shelter. On the wall of this cave you may see rudely inscribed by their unskilled hands, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

This was the prophet's strength. As he dwelt here in the solitude, he knew that God had not forgotten him. There was water for his thirst, the ravens fed him, and the brook as it flowed by kept murmuring, "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

II. *God had furthermore put Elijah in this secret place to get him out of the way ; for the prophet had come to have a great opinion of himself.* He felt that he alone was left, faithful among the faithless, to uphold the true religion. When Alexander T. Stewart, the merchant prince, was remonstrated with for discharging an old and trusted employé, he gave this reason,



"Whenever a man thinks himself to be indispensable, I make it a rule to discharge him." The Lord sometimes turns his servants aside for a like reason, that he may teach them their proper place. The evangelist Philip was sent away from Samaria when the great revival was at its height ; the word being, "Go down along the way to Gaza, which is desert." It is well for us to learn the lesson that God was able to manage the affairs of this world before we came upon the scene and will be able to get along somehow when we have passed from it.

This prophet had made a great prayer. The Apostle James refers to it thus : "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." And then proceeds to illustrate by saying, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain : and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." A great prayer and an awful answer ! What now could the prophet do ? He had brought down a famine upon the land and matters were quite beyond him. He was like a child who draws the wedge that sends the ship sliding from its cradle down into the sea ; the child can do no more, it has put that ship into the grip of the elements, has given it a place in the vast commerce of the globe, has sent it forth to wrestle with tides and tempests. So was it with Elijah. If he climbed the heights and looked toward the west, he might see the roofs of Jezreel. The people there were starving, muttering incoherently, cursing God and dying. Here was a state of things wherein Elijah could not be trusted. Had he been there he would have said, "This has gone far enough ; let the suffering cease." But God had a great lesson

to teach ; he deals with centuries, eternities ; and to the task he brings an infinite wisdom, an immeasurable justice, an illimitable love. All things are naked and open before him. All the roofs are lifted ; he sees every suffering child, all the sorrows and all the shame. He knows the wars and pestilences, the wrongs and persecutions. There are thoughtless and irreverent souls who say, "If I were God, these things should not be." But he who reigneth in light and glory unapproachable, perceives the end from the beginning. He cannot trust Elijah, nor can he trust you, nor me, to manage for him. Had such a thought entered the prophet's mind, the brook that flowed beside him must have murmured its reproof : "Be still and know that I am God."

III. Still further ; *the prophet was placed in this solitude in order that he might learn a religious truth which we are generally slow to grasp, to-wit, the doctrine of Special Providence.* It ought scarcely be necessary to say that the feeding of this prophet in his extremity was of a purely miraculous character. There is, however, a class of exegetes, such as busy themselves in the vain endeavor to eliminate the supernatural from Holy Writ, who explain the matter by saying that he climbed the rocks and took his sustenance from the ravens' nests. And there are others who say that there were no ravens in the case, but that the word *orehim* should be rendered "arabs" the fact being that the prophet was fed by Bedouins who happened that way in their journeyings, or came thither to drink. And there are still others who say that there was a village called Oreb near the Cherith and that its inhabitants provided for him. To what ex-

tremity are they driven who refuse to believe in anything that lies beyond their finger tips ! A recent writer, who calls himself a broad-church Episcopalian, has gone so far as to assert that the miracles of Jesus were wrought under hypnotic influence, thus making Christ a mere impostor and mountebank. How preposterous for such a man to profess, in any sense whatever, to believe in Jesus as the Christ of God.

If an objection had been entered to the doctrine of Special Providence in the presence of Elijah, it is safe to say that he would have answered in some such manner as this : " I went down to the brook in the gorge and wondered how provision would be made for me. I knelt and committed myself to the divine care and then lay down and slept. When I awoke I heard the rustle of wings and saw some ravens overhead ; by my side lay bread and flesh which they had dropped in their flight. ' Strange ! ' said I ; and kneeling down I rendered thanks. As the day advanced, I wondered how the good God would further provide for me, and then at eventide the ravens came again and left the bread and flesh. ' Passing strange,' said I ; ' a marvellous coincidence ! ' On the next morning the same thing happened, and again that night, and day after day, and week after week, and month after month, and for more than a year, as regularly as ever a mother spread her table for her children, those ravens came with bread and flesh for me. As I thought upon this in solitude it was an easy matter to arrive at a definite conclusion by the calculation of chances. It seemed to me as millions to one that the ravens had not merely happened to come that way. There must have been some one directing their flight. Can you blame me then if I

seem to live with the supernatural all about me and would you not regard me as a foolish man, were I to disbelieve in God?"

The proof of Special Providence is not always so extraordinary in our case; yet, we are constantly cared for by supernatural means. Is not every answer to prayer a Special Providence? And shall we not derive from this a lesson of simple trust in God? He provideth for all their meat in due season. We are his children. The little people do not fret; they do not say, "What will become of me at noon?" or, "Where will my dinner come from?" or, "Wherewithal shall I be clothed?" They see the father going out in the morning to the workshop, and the mother sitting by the window with her needle, and they know that all will be right. Let us become as little children in the confidence of faith. Let us hear, as Elijah heard, the brook Cherith murmuring past him, "Consider the ravens, consider the lilies. Are ye not much better than they? and shall not your Father care for you?"

But we shall miss the mighty lesson after all, unless at the close of this narrative we find ourselves standing under the cross. For what is the cross but the greatest of all Special Providences? There is a straight path leading from the brook Cherith to the hill Calvary. All is supernatural here. The same God who dispatched the ravens to the relief of his prophet, sent forth his only begotten and well-beloved Son to suffer for us. He dies yonder that we may satisfy the hunger of our souls and live forever. The hand that trembles with the nail at its palm, is the hand of God. The lips that are parched with the last fever, are the lips of God. The heart

that sorrows and breaks under the burden of the world's sin, is the heart of God. Great is the mystery. It is finished and he dies. Dead? No, hear! There is singing afar yonder, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and let the King of Glory enter in." There is the sound of water gushing from the rock. There is the voice of messengers going everywhere and calling, "Repent, believe and enter into life!" Here is the miracle of all miracles. Here is the Special Providence to which the feeding of Elijah and all other Special Providences direct us. This is the story the ravens tell. This is the message the brook murmurs: "There is a God and he careth for us. He hath put all nature under contribution, all earth and heaven too, in our behalf. He hath made bare his mighty arm to save us. Wherefore no goodness on his part is incredible; for if he spared not his only begotten Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? He hath made the mountains to be a refuge for his people. He hath opened the fountain of life: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come! Let him that heareth, say, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

## THE OPEN SEPULCHRE.

“And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here : for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”—MATT. xxviii. 5, 6.

The saddest day the world ever saw, was that which came between the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord. The disciples were overwhelmed with disappointment and sorrow. They had hoped that Jesus was he which should redeem Israel, and lo, He lay imprisoned in the grave. That Saturday was *dies non*. The followers of Christ had no heart for any toil or pleasure. Peter could not even go a-fishing. Out yonder in Joseph's garden was a grave and a great stone was rolled upon it, and the seal of the Roman Empire was affixed to it ; and within that grave lay all their hopes and purposes and aspirations. The sorrow of that Saturday was afterwards voiced by one of the apostles in these words : “ If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins ; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished ; if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

There is an old cloister under Westminster Abbey, which for centuries has been used as the burial place of kings. There lies the dust of Saxon sovereigns who died a thousand years ago. A few years since a visitor, absorbed in contemplation of old epitaphs and

other memorials of mortality, had lost all consciousness of time ; twilight came and he was still absorbed ; suddenly he heard the shooting of distant bolts, and realized that evening had come and he was locked in with the dead. He could hear the sound of retreating footsteps. He ran to the great oaken door and beat upon it. He cried aloud. Silence ! He was alone with the dust of the mighty. It was an awful night. The next morning they found him lying senseless upon the pavement. A single day of such bewildering anguish the world knew while Jesus lay in his sepulchre. The ruined race was imprisoned with its dead. The dead were everywhere. A long procession had been passing from life into God's acre from the infancy of time. Kings and potentates and humble folk lay under the pyramids, on the shelves of catacombs, in graveyards, on the bottom of the sea, or swept in dust clouds over the desert. They had passed in endless procession under the lintel of the dungeon, and, last of all, this Jesus of Nazareth, who had claimed to be the only begotten Son of God.

The next morning bright and early, a woman threaded her way along the streets of Joseph's garden—a broken-hearted woman ; her best friend was dead. He who had spoken to her as she passed along the streets, her garments bedraggled in the mire, her womanhood all soiled with sin, saying, "Come unto me, weary, heavy-laden one, and I will give you rest." He had dispossessed her of the Evil One, and she loved him beyond all telling, but he, alas ! was dead. And there fell in with her certain other women who bore spices for the anointing, and they said : "Who will roll us away the stone from the sepulchre ?" But as they drew near, behold, the stone had been

rolled away and an angel spake to them : " Ye seek Jesus which was crucified : he is not here ; he is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Her companions turned and ran to carry the tidings, but she, lingering, heard a voice, " Why weepest thou ? Whom seekest thou ? " She turned and saw Jesus ; but, thinking him to be the gardener, she said : " Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." " Mary ! " It was the voice of the Beloved. She fell at his feet, crying " Rabboni ! " which is to say, " My Master ! " Then she ran also, to tell the tidings. There was much running at this time, even as there was much singing at the advent of our Lord. On the evening of that day the disciples were met in the upper chamber, and into the midst he himself came, saying, " It is I." Then joy unspeakable took the place of disappointment. The day of sorrow had said, " If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain " ; but the day of the resurrection sang to them, " Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. So is come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Let us also come and see the place where the Lord lay ; for this open sepulchre is a determining factor in the problem of life and destiny.

I. *It establishes the Christhood of Jesus.*

(1) It had been prophesied that a virgin should conceive and bear a son and call his name " Immanuel," which is, being interpreted, " God with us " ; that he should take upon himself the sorrows of the human race and be himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs ; that he should be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed.



(2) Jesus of Nazareth claimed that he was this long-looked-for One. He said it to the woman of Samaria, "I that speak unto thee am he." He said it in the synagogue at Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He said it to the Scribes and Pharisees, "I and the Father are one." And they took up stones to stone him. He said it to those who boasted of their descent from Abraham, "Before Abraham was, I am," in this way assuming the ineffable name which had been revealed to Moses at the burning bush. He said it to the judge in answer to the frank question, "Art thou the expected King of Israel?" "Thou sayest it."

(3) He rested his title to divinity upon the truth of his resurrection, and proved it. His enemies clamored for a sign; he said, "I will destroy this temple and in three days rear it again"; and this he spake of his body. Again they clamored for a sign, and he answered, "I will give you no sign but that of Jonah; three days in darkness, and then life and immortality brought to light."

In Schliemann's excavations among the ruins of ancient Mycenæ, he came upon a royal tomb. The noble rank of its inmate was betrayed by many infallible tokens, but chiefly by a golden mask, a rusted sword and a dented shield. He concluded that this was the grave of Agamemnon, who was known as the King of Men. The mask was here, but where was the

face? The shield was here, but where was the hand that held it? The sword was here, but where was Agamemnon's right arm? A handful of dust. Had Christ been suffered to abide in the tomb, his flesh seeing corruption, who would have believed that he had upon his vesture and upon his thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Wherefore it is written, "He hath showed himself to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead."

II. *His resurrection also proves that the doctrine of Jesus is true.* In his preaching he not only touched upon the great verities, the problems that reach out into eternity, but he hung them together like a chain, so that the whole system of truth depends upon his victory over death. What are the essential parts of the doctrinal system which he has given us?

(1) An immanent God. God dwells in the world which he has created.

(2) Revelation. God has declared himself in the Incarnate Word, as it is written: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." And, also, in the Written Word, as the Master said: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me."

(3) The doctrine of man. Man born of God with the geometry of heaven in his brain, heir to a noble birthright, ever conscious, as Plato said, "of the moving of wings within him."

(4) Human responsibility. This Teacher held up a light that shone into the heart and conscience of all men and showed them to be sinners. He pointed to the sure penalty of sin in the gnawing of an undying worm and the pain of an unquenchable fire. And he

placed man at an infinite distance from his Father when he declared : " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

(5) The blood atonement. He pointed to the sacrifices which had been offered all along history from the time of Abel, and declared that they were all fulfilled in him as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He affixed to the benefits of the great sacrifice a single condition, to-wit: " He that believeth, shall be saved." This is the historic doctrine of Justification by Faith.

(6) The Holy Ghost. When he breathed upon his disciples and said, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost "—for your enlightenment, your building up in character and your qualification for service—he set up a New Economy. This was practically the founding of the Church upon the rock of his own divine authority ; the great organism through which the Holy Ghost is working toward the restitution of all things.

(7) Eternal life. He opened the windows of heaven and bade us believe in the joys of the Father's house. To die is not to cease to be. This he himself demonstrated and made doubly sure, when he rose from the dead as the first fruits of them that slept.

It is said that Faraday, in his wandering among the Alps, came upon a rural graveyard where the peasants of the neighboring village had laid away their humble friends. One grave he found marked by an uninscribed slab ; over it was a roof beneath which was fastened a bit of parchment with a name upon it. But nature had contributed just there a sweeter philosophy of life—an empty chrysalis. The

caterpillar had been transformed into a butterfly which had taken its flight. And Faraday says, as he left the little graveyard his heart was filled with a new confidence, that God would bring light out of darkness and life out of the sorrow of the tomb.

All these doctrines are fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. Without that, his teaching would have been as vain as that of the old missionary, who, being blind and demented, was furnished with a pen and an empty inkstand, so that he wrote continually, yet said nothing. But, blessed be God! the seal of divinity is put upon all that Jesus said; and we may with an unfaltering voice repeat our historic creed: "I believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his Son. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen."

III. *The empty sepulchre of Jesus proves the effectiveness of his work.* His enemies who stood about the cross, saw him in the anguish of death, heard his last cry, "It is finished!" and went their way, saying, "We shall hear no more of the Man of Nazareth." Hear no more of him? A few of his humble followers are going down out of the upper chamber to bear the tidings of his resurrection to the nations of the earth. We close our eyes for three centuries and open them, and lo, the red cross banner is waving above the eagles of Rome. We close our eyes again for three hundred years and open them, and lo, from Italy a monk is bearing the gospel across the channel into Britain, where a fierce-eyed people, clad in skins and wielding clubs, will hearken to him. We close our eyes for thirteen hundred years and open them,

and lo, four hundred millions of people are under the sway of the gospel of Christ !

Of two things I am personally made certain by this resurrection of my Lord : First, *My own salvation*. The spectres death and hell would else have haunted me forever, the king of terrors with his gleaming spear and the prince of darkness with his mocking of human hopes. But if Christ be risen, these are as harmless as the ghosts of our morning dreams ; for "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." If we were redeemed by his death, how much more shall we be saved by his life. Second. *My commission*. I know that I am called and that my labor is not in vain. No sooner did the disciples learn that Jesus was verily risen from the dead than they plucked up courage to face the gleaming axe, the fagots, the lions of the amphitheatre. Nothing could appall them now, because they knew that he who had been dead, was alive and liveth forever more. A monk knelt under a crucifix, gazing through tears at the dead Christ. Suddenly the flesh of the Crucified One assumed a life-like hue, the dull eyes shone, the lips moved. "Weep no more," they said ; "I have work for thee ; go, minister to the poor and heavy-hearted ; go, declare the unsearchable riches of the gospel, and lo, I am with you." The same word comes to us, "Go, evangelize, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It is related that when the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate asking that the sepulchre of Jesus might be made sure "lest his disciples should come by night and steal him away," he answered, "Go,

make it as sure as you can." Ay, make it sure. Lift up your hands and stay the glory of the rising sun! Go down to the shore at ebb-tide and mark a boundary in the sand and say to the ocean, "Thus far and no farther"! Purse your lips and breathe against Euroclydon and send him whimpering to his cave! "So they went and made the sepulchre sure, rolling a great stone before it and sealing the stone and setting a watch." The night wore on; to and fro paced the sentinels before the tomb; on a sudden the ground began to tremble under their feet. A crash! The rocks reeled and tottered and were rent asunder. A vivid flash from heaven. The guards fell to the earth as dead men. Then from yonder shining heights, a troop of angels glided down; the stone was rolled away and the King came forth wiping the grave mold from his brow. And then the angels thronged his chariot wheels and bore him aloft, to receive again the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. And far in the distance are voices: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of glory enter in!"

Wherefore, comfort one another with these words: "He that was dead is alive and liveth forevermore." So is come to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

## I AM DEBTOR.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians ; both to the wise, and the unwise."—ROM. i. 14.

It is debt that "makes the world go round." Debt is synonymous with credit, and credit means confidence, and confidence is identical with faith, and faith is a saving grace. The principle here involved underlies the industries of nations. Our banking system rests upon it ; for every man who makes a deposit gives evidence of confidence in his fellow-men. It is credit that turns the wheels of our great factories and sets our ships a-sailing on the sea. There is no such thing as debt or credit in Zululand. An acre of land for a string of beads—spot cash. Where you find civilization, you find mutual confidence. Credit is a magic word. The fact which it expresses is one, however, of the most delicate character ; resting on the right relation of assets and liabilities, it must ever be handled with care. Touch it unwisely and you have financial embarrassment. Touch it again and you get "hard times." Touch it yet again and you have bankruptcy—the red flag and the sheriff's hammer. Destroy it, and you get a measure of barbarism—a return to Zululand.

An insolvent debtor is the most miserable of men. There was Daniel Defoe who was ever overwhelmed with debt, pursued from morn till night by duns,

spending a large portion of his life in a debtor's jail. The jail was his island of Juan Fernandez, and "Robinson Crusoe" was but a parable of the lonely misery of insolvency. And there was Oliver Goldsmith who was dunned by his landlady, dunned by his milk-woman, dunned by his tailor; fleeing up one street when his duns were coming down another. Pursued all day by his creditors, and retiring at night to be ridden by the nightmare of debt. The bill for that famous suit which he wore at Boswell's dinner—that "ratteen suit lined with satin, and bloom-colored breeches"—was sent in after poor Noll was laid out for his burial and there was nothing wherewith to pay it. A sad tribute was that which one of his contemporaries paid to his memory: "Was ever poet so trusted before?"

It was a wise thing, therefore, that John Randolph said: "I have found the philosopher's stone. It is, Pay as you go." And it was a wise thing that Horace Greeley said: "Young man, if you have only fifty cents, do not run into debt; but buy a peck of corn and parch it and eat it and sleep the sleep of an honest man."

Yet here is Paul the Apostle confessing that he was over ears in debt, and not ashamed of it. Paul, of all men! It was he who protested that he would not be chargeable to any man; and in pursuance of that manifesto, he labored with his own hands at his trade of tent-making, while he went about preaching the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. As to that cloak which he had left at Troas, it is safe to say that wherever he purchased it, he paid cash for it. And as to that hired house of his in Rome, we may be quite sure that the rent was paid. When this man



died, after fighting his good fight, there was no estate to settle and there were no unpaid bills. He died square with the world, not chargeable to any man. Yet he protests here, that he was hopelessly in debt, and that his business in life, going about upon his missionary journeys, was simply to cancel that debt. He lived to pay it. The character of Paul was not unlike that of the Village Blacksmith of whom Longfellow wrote :

“ His brow is wet with honest sweat ;  
 He earns whate'er he can ;  
 He looks the whole world in the face,  
 For he owes not any man.”

It is important to enquire respecting this debt to which the Apostle makes reference ; for, indeed, it is an obligation which rests upon all, certainly upon all who profess to love and follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. *What was it?* We may find an explanation in another part of Paul's letter to the Romans, in which he says, “Owe no man anything, but to love one another.” *This debt is synonymous with the word “duty,”* spelled in the original way, due-ty. The reference is to an obligation which rests upon every man with respect to all his fellow-men. We have it again in the word “ought”—a word of tremendous significance in which are comprehended all the common duties of life. In one of Joseph Cook's lectures on “Conscience” he says : “Sum up the globes as so much silver, and the suns as so much gold, and cast the hosts of heaven as diamonds on a necklace into one scale, and if there is not there any part of the word Ought—if Ought is absent in the one scale and present in the other—up will go your scale laden

with the universe, as a crackling paper scroll is carried aloft in a conflagration ascending towards the stars. For God is in the word Ought, and therefore it outweighs all but God."

II. *How was this debt incurred?* It came upon us originally *by reason of our creation in the likeness of God*; for by this we are made members of a great family, bound to all our kinspeople by an obligation of mutual love and helpfulness. It is emphasized by divine providence. Not only did God create us in his own likeness and after his image, but he sustains us every moment of the day. In him we live and move and have our being. The air that we breathe is his; the sunlight that gladdens our eyes is his; the water that we drink is his; the food upon our tables is his; all good gifts are from the Father of Lights. I know a wayward lad, who, growing restive under parental restraint, ran away from his home. He had been well cared for, but nothing was good enough for him. When he stole away, with a bundle over his shoulder, to shift for himself, he was a plump fellow with rosy cheeks, wearing a neat jacket and with a tidy outfit generally. He was gone sixty days. He came back in rags and tatters, with sunken cheeks, and looking as if he had been drawn through a wringer. He had made up his mind that his home was reasonably comfortable, and that his father was a pretty good father after all. How would it be with us, if we could get away from our Father's care for a little while, for sixty days or for as many minutes, say? We should probably be glad to return to his bed and board. Providence would mean more to us, and we should be ready, in all likelihood, to acknowledge the responsibility involved in it.

But we come into a further indebtedness still *by reason of the divine grace*. We profess to be Christians. O the unspeakable gift ! O the riches of the heavenly grace ! The goodness of God is a casket of jewels, but brighter than all is the Koh-i-noor of salvation.

“ Buried in sorrow and in sin,  
At hell's dark door we lay ;  
But we arise by grace divine  
To see a heavenly day.”

What shall we render unto the Lord for all this loving kindness and tender mercy ? Duty, is the answer. I will take the cup of his salvation and pay unto him my vows.

III. *To whom is this debt owed ?* In the first place, obviously, *to God himself*. But he has made out a bill of charges bearing a personal endorsement which transfers the payment *to our fellow-men*. It need scarcely be said that we can tender him no remuneration for his kindness to us. We cannot add to his essential glory ; we cannot increase the sum total of his infinite exchequer ; but we can meet our indebtedness to him by extending his goodness toward all. So it is written : “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

We are, therefore, debtors to all men. This is distinctly a Christian thought. The pagan idea was well expressed by the philosopher Hierocles, who outlined his conception of relative duty in a series of concentric circles. A point at the centre represented himself ; the inner circle stood for his home and kinsfolk ; the next for his townsmen ; the next for his fellow-countrymen ; and the outermost circle repre-

sented the world beyond. The same conception finds expression in the familiar proverb, "Charity begins at home"; the meaning being, that a man shall primarily look out for himself, then for his kinsmen—"Me and my wife, my son John and his wife; us four and no more"—then with an ever-decreasing sense of responsibility for all the rest of his fellow-men. If this thought had prevailed in the mind of Dr. Livingstone, he never would have gone to Africa, and the dark continent with its habitations of cruelty would not have been opened up to civilization and the gospel of Christ; Carey would never have gone to India; Adoniram Judson would never have gone to Burmah; Hans Egede would never have gone to Greenland; the Apostle Paul would never have crossed the Hellespont in answer to the Macedonian call, and Europe would have continued under the sway of the pagan religions; and Augustine would never have gone over to Britain to preach to our ancestors, and this would have left us, in all probability, still clothed in skins as they were, and getting our living with stone knives and bludgeons.

Nay, more, if that proverb in its usual acceptation had commended itself to Jesus Christ, he never would have come all the way from heaven in order to deliver our ruined race from its bondage of sin. It is true that when he commanded his disciples to go into all the world to preach the gospel, he added, "beginning at Jerusalem"; but as his subsequent words showed, he intended that they should remain at Jerusalem only long enough to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that so they might be endued with power for the universal propagation of the gospel. "Go ye into all the world"; in this, indeed, we

find the true definition of our debt. And it is laid not only upon ministers in holy orders, but upon all those who follow the Lord Christ. Go ye, personally if you can ; in any case, by proxy, sending out your love, your sympathy, your prayers, your contributions, until up to the full measure of your influence you shall have done your utmost to evangelize the world. The prayer of David is the prayer for us : "O God, enlarge our hearts !" Enlarge our hearts until we shall be able to say as Wesley did, "The world is my parish." Enlarge our hearts until we shall understand that our neighbors are not merely those who dwell next door, but Jew and Greek, bond and free, all the children of men.

This was Paul's understanding of the matter, and this was why he went about everywhere preaching the Gospel. What was he doing at Philippi in the congregation of women that gathered for prayer by the river side ? He was seeking to pay his debt. What was he doing at Ephesus among his fellow tent-makers ? at Athens, when he declared the gospel to the philosophers sitting on the stone steps of the Areopagus below him ? in the palace at Cæsarea, where, with a chain upon his wrist, he spoke of righteousness, temperance and judgment, to kings and their paramours ? at Jerusalem, when he addressed the mob from the stairway of the castle of Antonia ? on shipboard, where, amid the whistling of the tempest, he spoke to the sailors of his faith ? or in Rome, where in the Prætorian Camp and in the Mamertine jail he indited epistles and spoke of salvation to his guards ? He was discharging his debt like an honest man. "Woe is me," cried he, "if I preach not the gospel ! Necessity is laid upon me, for I am debtor to every man."

IV. *What shall we do about it?* The first thing to do, is to *acknowledge the debt*. This is a mere matter of common ethics. We are to use our talents, our physical energies, our possessions, as remembering that God is the giver of all.

There are three kinds of people outside of the church and within it. (1) *Tramps*. They come to your back door with a petition for food and a pathetic tale of better days. Give them something to do in the wood-yard, and presently they have folded their tents like the Arabs and silently stolen away. A tramp is one who has no occupation, no money and no responsibility. His aphorism is, "The world owes me a living." He owes nobody anything. He takes the goods the gods provide and asks no questions for conscience' sake. There is a class of people in the Christian Church who seem to entertain a similar conception of life. They are in the Church for the purpose of securing salvation, that is, deliverance from eternal death, and ethical culture for building up in character. Beyond that they seem to have little concern.

(2) *Embezzlers*. That is, men who appropriate to their personal use funds which are simply entrusted to their care. Such was the farmer who, having been prospered, said: "What shall I do? I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing. This will I do: I will tear down my barns and build greater, and I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou art very prosperous; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry'; for what is there better under the sun than that a man should enjoy his life?" But he left God, his great creditor, out of the reckoning and a voice intruded upon his reflections: "Thou fool,

this night shall thy soul be required of thee. Then what about the goods which thou callest thine own?" A dead man—a contested will—an estate torn asunder—a property scattered like chaff before the winds. So passes away the glory of the man who uses for his own benefit that which does not belong to him. As Christian people, we profess to believe that all we have belongs to God. If there is anything more than empty sentiment in that statement, then we are not honest in devoting our energies to selfish uses. "Will a man rob God?" Shall we be less honest in our dealings with him than we are with our fellow-men? "Yet ye have robbed me," saith the Lord. "But wherein have we robbed thee?" "In tithes and offerings."

(3) *Trustees.* Our Lord made a last will and testament in which he left the unsearchable riches of the gospel to all men. These riches are entrusted to us for distribution. An honest trustee feels and acknowledges that he is debtor to every legatee. It is his business to see that every heir who is mentioned in the will shall receive his full share of the inheritance. This is his business as an honest man. Our Lord's heirs are everywhere. They are in the slums of the great city. They are out upon the frontiers of the land. They are dwelling by the banks of the Congo. It is our business, unless we are prepared to throw up our trusteeship, to see that the riches entrusted to us for distribution shall reach all men.

It is written that on a certain occasion our Lord, seeing the multitude an-hungered, had compassion on them, and having seated them on the grassy slopes, he multiplied the loaves. He then called upon his twelve disciples to distribute them. It so happened

that there were twelve baskets there, one for each disciple. It is easy to imagine that Peter, on receiving his basket of food, would think of his wife and children at home ; he had been their bread-winner, but had given up all to follow Christ. Let us suppose that he said to himself, "It may be that these dear ones of mine are in need. A man that careth not for his own household is worse than an infidel. I will keep this basket of food for them." And, presently, John, as he was going with his basket, met his brother James who bore a similar burden and said to him, "How grateful this food would be to our old father and mother on the lake shore. They no longer have us to lean on, and possibly they are in want. Why shall we not keep these baskets for them? Does not charity begin at home?" And so all the twelve might have reasoned within themselves. Under such circumstances, how long would it have taken to feed that multitude? But is not this precisely the method in which many of us are pursuing the Master's work? The living bread is not ours for personal consumption merely ; it was broken on Calvary and multiplied for the use of the whole world. We are simply the intermediaries through whom the Lord distributes it.

So, having recognized our indebtedness for Jesus' sake to all our fellow-men, the next thing to do is *to discharge it*. I have a friend who, ten years ago, lost all his earthly wealth ; at that time he made some sort of compromise with his creditors, but expressed his purpose to ultimately pay them all. Not long ago he called upon me and said, "I have just paid the last dollar that I owed. I have nothing left except a good conscience and a resolute purpose ; I



never was so happy in my life." And I grasped his hand and reminded him of what Robert Burns had said :

"An honest man, though ne'er so poor,  
Is king o' men, for a' that."

Sir Walter Scott, in building his beautiful home at Abbotsford, brought himself under an overwhelming burden of debt. He did not despair, however, but devoted the remainder of his life to meeting his obligations. He wrote unceasingly, and gave no rest to his weary brain. When friends remonstrated, he asserted his determination to live and die an honest man. Stricken with palsy, he was often tempted to rest, but would cry, "This is folly, bring me my pens and paper !" He died at last, leaving a square balance sheet. We revere the memory of such men.

O that we were as sensitive to the common rule of ethics in our relations with God, as we are in our dealings with our fellow-men ! When we fully recognize the fact of our indebtedness to all, and when the universal Church shall, with a resolute purpose, set about discharging the debt, the end will be near. Maranatha will be a fact accomplished. The kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdom of Christ. The nations are waiting for this. They are waiting to see in Christian people more evidence of their belief that faith in the gospel is necessary to eternal life. They are waiting to behold in us an all-consuming zeal for the spread of the glad tidings and the deliverance of the world.

When the Moravian missionaries went to Greenland, they were unable during the first year to make any impression whatever. Then came an epidemic

of small-pox, in which multitudes were prostrated, and the missionaries went about among them, ministering to body and soul in the Master's name. After that the way was clear. The people said, "You have nursed us in our sickness ; you have cared for us in our friendless distress ; you have buried our dead, when the dogs and ravens would have devoured them ; now tell us of your religion. For, from this time forward, your God shall be our God."

The spirit of self-denial in behalf of others is the spirit that will win the world yet. Go, preach the gospel, therefore. Go, pay your honest debt of gratitude to God. Go, deliver to your neighbors near and far, the message of life which God has entrusted to you. Be mindful of all his loving kindness and tender mercies and of the grateful service which should follow them. What shall I render unto the Lord for his goodness? I will take of the cup of his salvation, and pay unto him my vows.

## ON THIS ROCK WILL I BUILD MY CHURCH.

“And Simon Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. But I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”  
—MATT. xvi. 16-18.

This passage is fighting ground ; on it have been waged long campaigns of controversy. “On this rock will I build my church.” What rock? The Romish Church says, “Peter. What could be plainer? Does not *Petros* mean a rock?” Here is the foundation of the Papacy. Around the inner border of the dome of St. Peter’s runs this passage in letters of gold: “Thou art Peter and on this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

But the rock here referred to is not Peter, for the following reasons :

First, *Our text does not say so.* The words *Petros* and *petra*, or rock, are not identical ; the former is masculine, the latter is feminine ; one is a rock, the other a stone. Here is indeed a play upon words. In response to Peter’s declaration, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” the Master said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Son of Jonah : for flesh and blood hath not revealed this wonderful truth to thee,

but my Father which is in heaven hath revealed it. And I say unto thee, upon this rock I will build my church and thou shalt receive a new name, *Petros*, a stone hewn out of the rock, because thou hast announced it."

The Apostle John, who was the intimate friend of Peter, was called Theologus, from the fact that he was an instructor in theology, his system being, substantially, this: "God is love." The Master might have said to him, "Thou art Theologus and on this theology of thine will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Apostle James, brother of John, was an evangelist in that he declared the evangel of salvation. The Master might have said to him, had occasion called for it, "Thou art James, son of Zebedee; thou shalt be called the Evangelist, and upon thine evangel will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Our second ground for rejecting the interpretation which makes Peter the rock-foundation of the church, is *its utter unreasonableness*. The Church is the great organism through which God is working for the deliverance of the world from sin. It would be preposterous to suppose that God would found this institution upon a man—a fallible man—and Peter of all fallible men.

Why are the nymphs weeping by all the brooks and rivers of the earth? The Romans would say, Because of the sorrow that befell Phaëthon. And what was that? He besought of Apollo the privilege of driving the chariot of the sun for a single day and it was granted him. He grasped the lines and spoke to the fiery steeds. Away they sped

among the glittering worlds, colliding with stars and planets until all space was filled with flying sparks ; then in mercy the father of the gods smote him with a thunderbolt and he fell dead by the river side. The old fable is a mere silhouette of the chaos and confusion that would long ago have resulted in the moral universe, had God abdicated his sovereignty over the church and allowed Peter to take the reins ; but happily that he never did.

What then was this rock ? The good confession which Peter made, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." At this time our Lord was pursuing his journey through Cæsarea-Philippi, his face set steadfastly toward the cross. He greatly desired his disciples to be informed as to his divine character and mission, but as yet they had not been able to bear it. He was now moved to inquire, "Who do men say that I am ?" To this they gave various answers. "But," he questioned, "Who say ye that I am ?" Then Peter witnessed his good confession : "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was pursuant to these words that Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee" ; giving him his new name *Petros*, in recognition of his valorous words.

The truth here announced was in the nature of a great discovery. The disciples knew indeed that Jesus was a wonderful personage, for they had heard his sermons, had seen his miracles, and had taken note of his unique character. But it remained for Peter to discern the fullness of the truth : "Thou art the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, whom kings and prophets longed to see and died without

the sight ; thou art the Christ, from all eternity ordained and anointed to save the people from their sins." The heart of Balboa stood still with amazement when, from the crags of Panama, he saw the Pacific Ocean stretching far into the distance. A marvelous discovery indeed, but not comparable with this which burst upon the ravished vision of Simon Son of Jonah. It was the mightiest of all truths. In it were wrapt up the incarnation, the atonement and the resurrection. It had been hidden from the eyes of the wise and prudent, to be revealed to this fisherman. The Rabbis had not apprehended it ; Jesus of Nazareth seemed to them as a root out of a dry ground and there was no beauty that they should desire him. The philosophers by the Ilyssus little dreamed that this Jesus walking before their eyes was the veritable Son of God ; their eyes were holden that they could not see it. But Simon Peter grasped the glorious truth. The garment of this Nazarene prophet, a man of the people, the King of Kings disguised in flesh, fluttered aside for an instant and his royal ermine was disclosed to view. Now all his miracles were clear as day ; the secret of his wondrous sermons was explained, and of his life perfect in all manly graces. The great discovery was made. Eureka ! "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

I. *This interpretation of the words of Jesus making his own headship to be the foundation of his Church, is consonant with reason.* It is respectfully submitted that the other view making Peter the rock, is not reasonable. The history of the church is written in two volumes : one entitled Sinai, the other Calvary.

*The Law* was given on Mt. Sinai and formed the

basis of the Old Economy. That law was written by the finger of God himself, the same God who afterwards, robed in flesh, endured the agony of the cross. He stood in the midst of that economy of law, the rock-foundation of the ancient church. It would be preposterous to say that Moses was the foundation of that church since his only connection with the law was that of an intermediary who carried the tables down the mountain side, and broke them by the way.

*The Gospel* was proclaimed from Calvary, written by the pierced hand of God himself; the incarnate God who stood then and stands forever in the midst of that gospel, the rock-foundation of the Christian Church. And what part does Peter take in this? The part of a herald only, leading the little company of apostles, whose numbers were destined to be multiplied into that great procession of evangelists whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains because they carry the glad tidings of life. Nor is there any warrant for interweaving the name of Peter with that of Christ in the primacy of the church. If Phidias was banished for placing his name in the corner of the shield of Athene, what shall be said of the presumption which places Peter in the seat of the only begotten Son of God?

II. *The view here advanced is consonant with Scripture.* The divine revelation is given in two volumes which we call the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament is full of Christ from the protevangel in Eden, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," on through psalm and prophecy until the Messianic word fades out in the expiring gleam of Malachi's torch. And where does Moses stand in

this Old Testament ? In the midst of the camp with his hand uplifted toward the brazen serpent, the prophetic symbol of Christ crucified, crying, "Look and live !"

The New Testament likewise is full of Christ from its opening picture of the child in the manger to that vision of the Apocalypse where the great multitude encircle the throne of the Crucified One, singing, "Thou art worthy to receive honor and power and dominion, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us kings and priests unto God." And where stands Peter in the New Testament ? In the midst of the Pentecostal congregation, speaking not of himself, but of another : "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved among you by miracles and wonders and signs, him have ye taken and with wicked hands have crucified and slain ; whom God hath raised up, saying, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool."

Thus Christ is everything and Moses and Peter are nothing save as they wait upon him. As of old it had been written, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth, shall not make haste," so it was written in the Church of the new dispensation, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

III. *This view furthermore is consonant with history.* In point of fact there never was a time when, by the great body of believers, Peter was regarded as the rock foundation of the Church, or as her primate, or as the Vicar of God. His primacy was disputed



among the twelve when they contended as to which should be greatest in the kingdom of God. His authority, which never reached a claim of infallibility, was called in question when Paul withstood him to the face and his own co-presbyters decided against him. The man chosen to moderate the first of the great councils was not Peter, as would have been a logical necessity had he been regarded as primate, but James the pastor of the Jerusalem Church. In the Council at Nicea, A.D. 325, where the great controversy was respecting this very question, there was no mention of Peter's primacy, but everything centered in the headship of Christ. Nor indeed was the proposition of papal supremacy, founded on the primacy of Peter, ever formally suggested until the closing in of the shadows of the dark ages. Its formulation precipitated the Reformation. It was in the city of Rome, under the shadow of St. Peter's, that Luther, climbing the Sancta Scala, heard, as it were, a voice from heaven declaring to him the great doctrine of a standing or a falling church—the doctrine of Justification by Faith in the only begotten Son of God. In all this, history agrees with Scripture in the proposition that there is no primate whatsoever aside from Jesus Christ himself, except that Anti-Christ whom Paul calls the son of perdition, "who exalteth himself above all that is called God and as God sitteth in the temple of God and is worshipped as God."

From the proposition that the Church is founded upon the headship of Christ we proceed now to three important inferences :

First. *Here is the basis of Church Unity.* All denominations are practically one in Christ and they

are one in nothing else. In vain the recent encyclical of Leo XIII. calls upon all the "separated" brethren to come under the ægis of Rome ; that is, in an acknowledgment of the primacy of Peter. In vain equally are all the manifestoes put forth by the Anglican Church looking to the union of all denominations upon the basis of the historic episcopate ; that is, the hierarchy proceeding from the Twelve as Vicars of God. The only lodestone in all the universe which can gather up and bind together the various parts of the great fellowship, is Jesus Christ, who said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." No church can be ruled out of the charmed circle if it acknowledges the supremacy of Jesus. There is already a practical and effective unity among all bodies of believers that can say, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all."

Second. *The catholicity of the church also rests in this same proposition.* No proclamation of good tidings can be of universal application unless it rests upon the universality of the grace of Jesus Christ. Who is Paul? Or who is Apollos? Or who is Cephas? Or who is Wesley? Or who is John Calvin? Or who is Leo XIII.? Who are all these hierarchs? Let Christ be all in all. There can be no substitution of the name of Peter for that of Jesus Christ on the cornerstone of the Church until it shall be announced from heaven, that God so loved the world that he gave Simon Bar-Jonah to redeem it. There can be no gathering of the nations under the shadow of the Vatican until it can be truthfully said, The blood of St. Peter cleanseth from all sin.

Third. *Here also is our assurance of the perpetuity of the Church.* Because it rests upon the rock of ages,

the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The words of Luther at the dedication of the Wittenberg Chapel were wisely spoken : " Now must Christ be everything to us, and to whom Christ is everything all else is nothing. He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He is all and in all." And because the Church is thus centred in the personality of Jesus, his word is her personal guarantee of safety.

Oh where are kings and empires now,  
Of old that went and came ?  
But, Lord, Thy Church is praying yet  
A thousand years the same.

Unshaken as the eternal hills,  
Immovable she stands ;  
A mountain that shall fill the earth,  
An house not made with hands.

## THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

“ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”—MATT. 16, 19.

Here is a great truth,—a truth which has given rise to endless controversy. In the opinion of some, the words of Jesus on this occasion gave to Peter and his apostolic associates and successors a roving commission to take general charge of divine affairs. The destinies of the race were placed in their hands. It is for them to save or damn at will. God, having devised the plan of redemption and carried it out at an infinite expenditure on Calvary, was then pleased to turn over the whole matter to human hands.

I do not believe it. There is something wrong with such an exposition of Scripture.

The revolutionary tribunal of 1794 in France had power to arrest without complaint, try without jury, and convict without witnesses ; in consequence of such arbitrary exercise of power, no less than fourteen hundred victims died on the guillotine between the 10th of June and the 27th of July in that awful year. The life of the nation was at the absolute disposal of Robespierre and his four confrères. The world stands aghast at such a concentration of power in the hands of mortal men. But this is a mere nothing, a bagatelle, in comparison with the power which is said to have been committed to the hands of

Peter and his associates ; for they had to do not merely with the life and estate of men, but with their eternal destiny !

The disciples did not so understand their commission. Nor did Peter himself so understand it. The nearest approach to the exercise of any such authority was in the case of Simon Magus, who had played the hypocrite during a great revival at Samaria, and had offered money in return for the *charismata* or special gifts of the Spirit of God. Then Peter said, "Thy money perish with thee." And the man was filled with sudden remorse. Now was Peter's chance. What did he say ? "Absolvo te !" Oh, no : "Repent and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee."

Contrast that with the thing that happened at Canossa when Henry II., who had been deposed from his royal office, came over the Alps to entreat papal absolution. He presented himself at the gate of Gregory VII. and made his humble petition. He was ordered to remain at the gate and abstain from food ; he was further ordered to strip himself of the royal purple and put on hair-cloth. At the end of three weary days of penance, he was required to go into the presence of Pope Gregory and kiss his feet. Then, this Vicar of God was pleased to say, "Absolvo te." Can it for a moment be believed that God has abdicated his prerogative in this way ? Shall we not rather say that this papal assumption is a mere playing with holy things—a grim and blasphemous farce ?

The claim of the Romish Church to the power of plenary absolution, with its accessories, such as the confessional, the indulgence, the anathema, extreme

unction, the deliverance of souls from purgatory, rests upon three passages of Holy Writ. Let us take these up *seriatim* and do our best to arrive at the truth.

The first of these scriptures is in Matt. xvi. 13-19: *And Jesus asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say, that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

The rock here referred to, which was to be the strong foundation of the Church, was the good confession of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this tremendous fact the Church was to be so established that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. In reward for the making of that good confession, Simon the son of Jonas received a new name, to wit, Peter; meaning a stone hewn out of the rock. And he received a still further reward in the Power of the Keys.

What are these keys? (1) *Certainly not the keys of heaven.* The picture of St. Peter sitting at the gate of the celestial city, as a sort of ticket-taker, is a ludicrous perversion of the truth. There are indeed

no keys of heaven. The twelve gates are always open. If any of the souls that wander in eternal darkness should desire to enter, the way is clear ; but, alas ! their characters were so crystallized during their probationary term on earth that such an attempt is a moral impossibility. They cannot because they will not. The only reason why heaven is not invaded by the lost spirits is because it is an uncongenial place. Over its open gates are written, "There shall in no wise enter anything that worketh abomination or maketh a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." But there is no other barrier, there is no warder, there are no keys.

*Nor (2) are the keys here referred to those of the invisible Church ;* that is, the great fellowship made up of all in earth and heaven whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. With this church-roster neither Peter nor any other of the apostles nor any ecclesiastical council has aught to do. "And I saw, in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book sealed with seven seals. And a strong angel proclaimed, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof ? And no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth"—not Peter nor any other apostolic dignitary—"was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open the book. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not ; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed to open it. And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof . for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us

to be kings and priests unto our God." So then it is Christ who has charge of the roster of the invisible Church. This is in line with the prophecy of Isaiah: "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder." And, also, with the message to the Church in Philadelphia: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man shall shut it."

*These keys must, therefore, be (3) the keys of the visible Church.* And this is an historic fact. As the reward of Peter's loyalty to the fundamental doctrine of the headship of Christ, he was commissioned to throw open the doors of the visible Church to the Gentile world. This occurred formally on the day of Pentecost. Up to that time the Jews alone, as a distinctly chosen people, had been included in the charmed circle. There was a middle wall of partition between them and all the nations of the earth; but on that day when the Holy Ghost descended upon the company assembled for prayer and when, in response to Peter's sermon on Christ crucified, the whole assembly—made up of Jews and Greeks, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, and representatives from every portion of the earth—cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins; for the promise is unto you and to your children and to all them that are afar off; even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Thus the middle wall of partition was thrown down; the keys of



the visible Church were turned and the gates rolled back to admit all the penitent children of men.

It is obvious that in this matter Peter stood solitary and alone. To speak of a line of successors would be as preposterous as to make a similar claim with respect to Columbus in the discovery of the new world. The gates of the Church were thrown open ; there was no further need of the keys because they were thrown open once for all.

The second scripture referring to this matter is in Matt. xviii. 15-18. *"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

The power of binding and loosing, which had been conferred upon Peter in connection with the Power of the Keys, is here conferred upon the apostolic circle. And inasmuch as this commission was granted in immediate connection with the question of trespass within the Church, it is obvious that it refers to Church government. It is for the appointed officers of the Church to determine what rules shall prevail. This is the power of binding and loosing as it was understood in the Jewish Church ; as when it was said, "Shammai bindeth and Hillel looseth" ; or as Josephus says, with reference to certain ethical

rules, "The Pharisees have power to bind and loose at will." The commission which was here granted to the apostolic circle involved a triple function :

(1) *The formulating of terms of admission to the Church.* It is clear that there must be some authority to make doctrinal and ethical formularies which shall serve as conditions of church membership. And upon whom could this power be so appropriately conferred as upon that little circle which was the nucleus of the visible Church and constituted its formal government ?

(2) *The maintenance of order within the Church.* This is done by the laying down of certain rules of right belief and conduct. This is properly called, binding and loosing. The Council at Jerusalem was called to settle the question as to what should be required of the Gentile Christians with respect to observances which the Jewish Christians regarded as obligatory. Paul and Peter having discussed that question, the Apostle James declared the judgment of the court, which was to this effect : that on the one hand the Gentile converts should abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, things strangled and blood ; but that on the other hand, the yoke of Jewish bondage should be no further placed upon them. Here was a case in which the officers of the Church formally exercised the power of binding and loosing, and that same power rests in our ecclesiastical judicatories to this day.

(3) *The power to administer discipline.* This, also, is necessary for the maintenance of order. A certain man in the Corinthian Church was accused of a nameless crime. He was probably of good social position, and his offence was winked at. Paul, how-

ever, exhorts the Corinthian Church to deal summarily with him; he exhorts them to meet "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" and bind this evil doer and deliver him over to Satan in the hope of his reclamation or "for the destruction of the flesh." Here is a case of judicial binding. It was what we call suspension or excommunication. The probability is that there ought to be a more frequent exercise of this power in the Church. A few years ago a man committed suicide in St. Paul's in London, and immediately it was announced that there would be a formal purging and reconsecration of the Church. But there are worse stains than the blood of a suicide in many of our churches, of which our ecclesiastical dignities should take knowledge; for the Church is as a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid.

The third scripture bearing upon the matter in hand is in John xx. 19-23. *"The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."*

Here we have the power of absolution. Observe it is conferred not only upon Peter and his fellow apostles nor only upon the officials of the Church. There were in the upper chamber at this time humble Christians who had received no honor save that of

following Christ. Whatever then this "power of absolution" may be, it is vested in all believers alike.

(1) *There is no reference here to what is called judicial or plenary absolution*; that power remains in divine hands, for who can forgive sins but God alone? The wrong view of this commission is illustrated in the monk Tetzels who set up his booth at Jüterbok and announced that he was prepared to grant indulgences. The most heinous of crimes could be shielded from retribution by the payment of a stipulated number of florins. He proposed, also, to deliver souls from purgatory for a consideration. Over the chest, prepared for the receiving of the coins, was written this legend :

"Soon as the coin within this chest doth ring,  
The soul shall straightway into heaven spring."

How blasphemous! How puerile! What a preposterous interpretation of the Master's words! And from a similar perversion have arisen all the historic crimes of the confessional and the anathema. The whole race of Huguenots was placed under the ban; cursed in soul, body and estate; doomed to death temporal and eternal. The tolling of the bells of St. Bartholomew marks the climax of this awful perversion of truth. Did ever Peter or any other of Christ's apostles claim such authority as this?

(2) *The power conferred upon them and upon all believers in this word of Jesus was that of declarative absolution.* This is perfectly clear when the circumstances are taken into view. It was when his disciples were met in the upper chamber with closed doors that he suddenly appeared among them saying, "Peace be unto you." He then added, "As the Father hath sent me into the world, so send I you."

What for? The Father hath sent him into the world to deliver the world from sin, as he said in the synagogue at Nazareth when he opened the Scriptures and read: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"; and continued, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." As he was sent to proclaim deliverance by the power of the great sacrifice on Golgotha, so are these sent to point the nations toward the cross. Here is the only absolution; absolution by faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And having thus spoken of their errand, he breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Here was their qualification for the great work of evangelization and then came the words, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they shall be retained." The word of every believer, who announces absolution in Jesus Christ, is ratified in heaven. The humblest of all Christians is commissioned to go, saying, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him." That is, his sin shall be remitted or retained just as he accepts or rejects the proffer of mercy in the crucified son of God.

(3) Here then a grave responsibility rests on us. The true apostolic succession is in this, that *we are all sent and instructed precisely as the apostles were, to declare absolution in Christ.* The world will be converted when all Christians shall be faithful in this office.

Go ye everywhere and evangelize. We have power to convert, as it is written : "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." We have power to remit sins in this, that we can point sinners to the saving power of the cross. And, alas ! it is for us also to "retain" the sins of the impenitent upon them, as we oftentimes do, by our neglect to warn them of the wrath to come and offer the pardoning grace of God. We are, in a sense, responsible for the destinies of men. The world lieth in darkness because God awaits the faithfulness of his people. How long will the wheels of his chariot tarry ? Until you and I shall do our duty.

A man on his death-bed recently confessed that a former friend of his had been five years in prison for a crime of which he was wholly innocent. The facts which would have released this prisoner at any moment, had long been in his possession, but personal considerations restrained him. He could not divulge what he knew without incriminating himself ; so for five long years he had kept silence. There are souls in prison everywhere—all "concluded under sin"—we have in our possession the information that can release them. It is for us to open the prison doors and bid the oppressed go free. It is for us to declare absolution in the name of the Crucified One. Have we nothing to say ? Hear the word of the Lord : "If I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him no warning, he shall die in his sins, but his blood will I require at thy hand ' And hear again the word of the Lord : "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

## MASQUERADING.

“Why feignest thou thyself to be another?”—I. KINGS xiv. 6.

A queen disguised in the russet garb of a peasant, basket on arm, goes trudging wearily, afoot and alone, from the palace at Tirzah up to the prophet's house. She is the wife of Jeroboam, that Jeroboam who has come down through history marked with the stigma, “who made Israel to sin.” There is trouble in the palace; the first-born son, heir of the throne, lies at the point of death. The altars of Baal burn upon the heights, but there is no help there. God only can relieve, and to him the sore-hearted mother goes in her extremity. The seer Ahijah, old and blind, has long been alienated from the throne. In her peasant's mask, she hopes to deceive him and secure a blessing on her child. But he hears her coming; he knows her footstep. “Come in,” he cries at her approach; “come in, thou wife of Jeroboam. Why feignest thou thyself to be another?” “Thus,” says Bishop Hall, “God laughs at the frivolous tricks of foolish men who think to dance in their nets and be unseen of heaven.”

Life as a masquerade ending with a transformation scene, “Masks off!”—this is our lesson to-day.

“All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages.”

“Great is paint!” cries Carlyle. Fashion came in with the fall; fashion is falsehood, and falsehood rules the world. We are none of us precisely what we seem to be. In one of Coleridge's letters he speaks of a state dinner at which he sat opposite a bald and venerable gentleman of most imposing presence: dome-like forehead and profound eyes, his whole appearance suggesting moral power. “If he would but speak,” thought Coleridge, “what wisdom should we hear, what breathing thoughts in burning words.” Suddenly the man spoke: “Gi' me them dumplin's, will you? Them's the jockeys for me.” The oracle had been heard from and the spell was broken. We cannot determine the inward man from the outward appearance. Appearances deceive.

Charles Lamb says, “The only honest men are beggars. The ups and downs of the world concern them not. The prices of stock or land affect them not. They are not expected to become bail or surety for any. No man troubles them with questions of religion or politics. They are never out of fashion nor limp awkwardly behind it. They put not on court mourning. They wear all colors, fearing none. They are the only people in the universe who are not obliged to study appearances.” But even beggars have been known to be insincere. Can you trust the man who presents himself at your door with a plea for charity and a tale of better days? Not long ago a beggar died in the upper end of Manhat-



tan Island, and his poverty was found to be a mere make-believe; for there was money under his mattress, money in the tea-pot, money on his mantel, money under the hearth, money in the ground under the rose bush. No, we cannot even trust our beggars; they, too, are merely players.

The Psalmist wrote, "I said in my haste, All men are liars"; on which Adam Clarke quaintly remarked, "Had he lived in our time, he might have said it at his leisure." Where shall Diogenes go with his lantern to find a thoroughly honest man? To the market place? What a flutter there would be in the Chamber of Commerce if all its members were required to appear some day with Bradstreet's rating on their foreheads and their balance sheets pinned upon their breasts. In society? "Great is paint!" Beau Brummel and Miss Flora McFlimsey still live. Hands and feet, bright eyes and auburn hair, red lips, fair complexion, pearly teeth, buttered words, warm kisses and solemn vows—how often they are wholly false: how seldom wholly true. Or in politics? There is probably as much of honesty here as in any department of life, because the politician is perforce under the people's eyes; his business is everybody's business, and he must needs take heed to his ways. But of log-rolling and pipe-laying and wire-pulling there is plenty and to spare. And who is able to discern between the demagogue and the people's friend? In the Church then, surely? Nay. It was into this charmed circle that the Lord himself came to speak of wolves in sheep's clothing and of whited sepulchres and of actors wearing masks, for this is the meaning of the word "hypocrite," a man under a mask. I am not saying that all men mean to be dishonest, but that

there is, wittingly or otherwise, a measure of dishonesty in all, and churchmen are made of common dust.

“ The cleanest corn that e’er was dight  
May hae some pyles o’ caff in.”

So that having done our best, as human nature goes, we may still confess that Robbie Burns was not wholly without excuse when he sang :

“ O ye wha are sae guid yoursel’,  
Sae pious and sae holy,  
Ye’ve nought to do but mark and tell  
Your neebor’s fauts and folly.

“ Ye see your state wi’ theirs compared,  
And shudder at the niffer;  
But cast a moment’s fair regard,  
What makes the mighty differ ?

“ Discount what scant occasion gave  
That purity ye pride in,  
And (what’s aft mair than a’ the lave)  
Your better art o’ hidin’.”

In view of these facts, there are certain considerations which we may profitably dwell on.

I. *God knows us.* We may deceive others. Indeed in the interest of self-protection we feel obliged to do it. A man whose name is a synonym for purity of character said once, “If there were a window in my breast, I would not dare to walk along the streets lest the very boys should throw stones at me.”

We may deceive ourselves. Indeed we scarcely can avoid doing so. It was very well for Thales to say, “Man, know thyself.” But how is a man to know himself when his constant effort is to avoid ap-

pearing in *propria persona*? They say that Edwin Booth played Hamlet in such a manner that he lost all consciousness of self, and in course of time there were those among his friends who asserted that he began to look like Hamlet and think like him.

But we cannot deceive God. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Our physicians have long been wishing that some method might be devised by which they could look into the human frame and observe the processes of life. A recent application of electricity is said to make this possible. Under the powerful light the physical system is illuminated; the hand becomes translucent, showing bones and veins, the quivering of sinew and the circulation of blood. It was not necessary, however, for God to await this development of science. His eyes have ever searched us through and through; all things are naked and open before him.

II. *Life proves us.* We speak of passing through a probation here. We are always under fire and acid, so that character is brought out more and more as the years pass on.

We may carry on our deceptions voluntary and involuntary for a season with success. A bookkeeper recently confessed that for twenty years and more he had been tampering with day-book and ledger, making artificial offsets and drawing false balances ; but all the while his deception was growing more and more tense ; the denouement was only a question of time. The trouble with this man was that he allowed himself to live too long. He went too far with the play. The curtain should have fallen before the fifth act.

Then exposure ! There are exposures every day. The newspapers are full of them. How we gloat over them like jackals at their prey. If men who are conscious frauds live long enough, life will certainly expose them. So Ahab went up to battle at Ramoth-Gilead well clad in a disguise. Quite safe he thought ; but, alas ! in the midst of the conflict, an arrow, shot at a venture, smote him between the joints of the harness and he fell, crying, "Carry me out, for I am wounded and discovered !"

Then come the retributions of time. Our un-staged actors are sometimes given "benefits" on the mimic stage, but never in real life. Aaron Burr, during his later years, declined to attend church because no man would open a pew door to him. The former apostle of æsthetics, who has recently been exposed in London, is so wholly under the ban that his very name is unspoken. No mercy for him ! Why ? He is no more false and vicious and abhorrent than ever ;

but he has played out his fifth act. There are ten commandments which severally begin, "Thus saith the Lord." There is an eleventh which begins, "Thus saith the devil"; and it is, "Thou shalt not be found out."

III. *Death unmasks us.* Therefore we speak of death as the King of Terrors. Were it otherwise, death would be to us the fairest of God's angels. But, alas! at the border line between time and eternity, all dominoes fall off.

Go out into the graveyard and heed not the monuments there nor the brave epitaphs, for in these are preserved all the adventitious distinctions of life; but go down under the sod, where the resurrection angel will go, and fill your hand with mingled earth, and lo! all the analytic chemists on earth cannot determine which is millionaire's and which is beggar's dust.

Go up to the great assize. See yonder on the throne the Honest Judge, the only Honest Judge earth ever saw, and mark how he determines all cases in equity. Pilate and Herod are before him, cowering and hiding their faces. Here greatness seems little and humility is great. Death is a mighty leveller. Nero drops his sceptre and Alexaminos, the Christian slave who toiled in his kitchen, is crowned with honor. Here Catharine de Medici, the enchantress of popes and prelates, wrings her blood-stained hands, and the Magdalene, who wept upon the Master's feet, passes into the endless life. Here is a universal adjustment; the crooked things are all made straight; there are no deceptions now.

Honest at last! Honest at last and forever. The hypocrite's hope is swept away like a spider's web.

All deceivers have been turned out of their refuges of lies and their soul shines as the day ; for the light of God shines through them.

And what are the lessons from all this? One only : Be honest ; be true. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Live up to your profession. *Esse quam videri*—to be rather than to seem—is the motto for an upright life. Live in singleness of heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but doing the will of God from the heart.

Let us be true to ourselves. Nature is truth.

“ To thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

But we cannot be true to ourselves unless there is a reserve of character within us. The difference between the wise and foolish virgins was that the latter took “no oil in their vessels with their lamps.” Their lamps burned, too, but the wicks were charred and the flame flickered and went out. It is only the man with character who can dare to show himself as he is. And the basis of character is in the imitation of Christ. He is the only honest man whom God ever looked on. Therefore, he said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” He was what he seemed to be. He spake what he felt. He was ever true to his convictions. He hated sham and pretence. He was in all his thought and character as transparent as the day. The nearer we approach to his character, the closer do we come to the full stature of a man—frank, honest, ingenuous manhood.

The most heart-searching prayer that ever was offered, the bravest and most awful, is that prayer of

David: "Search me, O God, and try me." The man who made that prayer had proven his valor in many brave struggles. As a boy he had gone down into a pit on a snowy day and slain a lion; as a stripling he had gone out with a sling against the champion Philistine; as a man he had met the hosts of the enemy, again and again, on the high places of the field; but never had David done so brave a thing as in this prayer, "O God, search me." Can we make that prayer? Can we bow down and plead with God to throw into the centre of our hearts the searchlight of his own fierce gaze, and expose our frailties and falsities? Herein is all of confession and penitence. Lord, search me; show me myself; try me and see if there be any evil way in me; then forgive the evil for Jesus' sake, and lead me in the way everlasting; lead me in the sunlit path of true, honest, ingenuous Christlike manhood.

" Lord, make me like Thyself;  
Lord, make me be myself;  
Seeming as one who lives to Thee  
And being what I seem to be."

## WHOM THE SON MAKES FREE.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, If ye continue in my words then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever ; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”—JOHN viii. 31-36.

Our Lord was here speaking to certain Jews who “believed on him.” Their faith, however, must have been very rudimentary. They had seen his miracles and were prepared to say with Nicodemus, “No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.” They had heard his sermons, marvellous sermons on the tremendous truths of the endless life, and they were prepared to say like the Roman guard, “Never man spake like this man.” But it was Christ's purpose to lead them on to a larger measure of faith and devotion. “If ye would be my disciples,” said he, “continue in my word and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

But these words awoke within them a spirit of resentment. “We are the children of Abraham,” they retorted, “and were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?” Had they forgotten then the long captivity in Egypt, the weary



toiling in the brick-yards, the hard task-masters and the whips of scorpions? Or had they forgotten the seventy years of their Babylonish captivity, when they hanged their harps by the willows and wept at the remembrance of Zion? Or were they oblivious of the fact that at this moment they were ground down under the most absolute tyranny the world had ever seen? They had lost all the functions of self-government, were paying tribute to Rome, and the standard of the golden eagle was at the temple door. Nay, these things they remembered well; but their reference was to moral bondage. As the seed of Abraham, they were a chosen people. They might be bound with fetters and manacles, but they could not be deprived of their birthright of spiritual freedom.

And it was in this sense that Jesus understood them, as his answer indicates: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. Ye say ye are children of Abraham, but have ye forgotten that Abraham had two sons; the one of whom dwelt in his father's house and received the inheritance, while the other was sent forth into exile to make his home among the fastnesses of the hills? It is quite possible, therefore, for you to be children of Abraham and yet be in spiritual bondage." But the only begotten Son of God has power of manumission; "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

The freedom here referred to is the same mentioned by the Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." And, also, in his letter to the Romans where he says, "The creation itself

shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The Jews had been looking for a Messiah to deliver them from the tyranny of the Roman government; he was expected to come and restore the glory to Israel. No doubt the Jews here addressed supposed that Jesus was this promised Messiah and would set up his throne in Jerusalem as the successor of David. His words, however, must have disillusioned them. He had come to be a liberator, indeed, but from spiritual bondage; as when he said at the outset of his ministry in Nazareth, that he had come to preach deliverance to the captives, to bring those whose souls had been led captive by the prince of darkness into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

We are always in danger of a misapprehension with respect to freedom. In the time of the Reign of Terror the mobs of Paris wrote upon the dead walls, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!"—words of which they had no true apprehension whatever. To them liberty meant license; equality meant the levelling down of all who had attained to greatness; and fraternity meant the spoliation and distribution of all things. On her way to the guillotine Madame Roland, as she passed the statue of Freedom in the Place de la Révolution, is said to have exclaimed, "O Freedom! what crimes are perpetrated in thy name!" It is greatly to be feared that there is a false notion of moral freedom in many minds. What is this "glorious freedom" into which the only begotten Son of the Father brings us?

I. *Negatively.* It is a deliverance from three task-masters, to wit: sin, the bondage of law, and the tyranny of self.

(1) *It is a deliverance from sin.* The man who is morally enfranchised is made free not *in* sin but *from* sin. To be free in sin is indeed an impossibility, "For he that doeth sin," that is habitually, "is a bondslave of it." The man who goes reeling through the street this morning after a night of revelry, is as really a slave as if the drink habit in personal form were seen to be scourging him at every step. So also are the victims of impurity and the gaming habit and avarice and unholy ambition. They are enslaved as Samson was after his eyes were put out and he was compelled to sit grinding like a woman at the mill in the doorway of Dagon. Sin is a hard taskmaster; it welds our fetters while bidding us eat, drink and be merry, delighting ourselves in the way of our heart and the sight of our eyes. I am under the dominion of the vices that control me. My soul is in pawn to them and can never be free till the Mighty One shall redeem it; but in Christ "sin hath no more dominion over us."

(2) *In Christ we are delivered from the bondage of the law;* not from the government of law, but from its tyranny. For there are two ways of obeying the law. Here is a gang of workmen on the highway breaking stone; they are clothed in prison garb and every one has a ball and chain upon his ankle while the taskmaster stands near by. Ask them if they love the law, and they will answer that they hate it. The law is their enemy; the law has put that chain upon them; the law hath clothed them in those garments of shame, and they hate it. Ask them if they keep the law, and they will answer that they keep it perforce. Are they not under the eye of the taskmaster? To break the law would be to incur a deeper punish-

ment : they dare not do it. But here are citizens going about the street in pursuance of their ordinary vocations who keep the law because they are in sympathy with the purposes of the Commonwealth. They observe the statutes and ordinances because they desire the well-being of the community. To them obedience is not a matter of necessity but of second nature. In both these cases the law is kept; but the gang of prisoners are in bondage under it, while the others are free. In like manner there are those who obey the divine laws because of the stern requirement of duty ; while there are others, such as the Son has made free, who keep the law because they love it. They have entered into what the Apostle James calls, " The perfect law of liberty." So as Paul says, " We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father." The moral code is an expression of the government of heaven of which we know ourselves to be a part ; and the lawgiver is our Father, and we obey because we love him.

(3) *In Christ we are also liberated from the tyranny of self.* A man has, so to speak, two selves or two natures, a higher and a lower. Paul calls them the old man and the new man, or the old Adam and the new Adam. And these two are ever in conflict striving for the mastery. There is a war in my members so that the good I would, that I do not ; and the evil that I would not, that I do. Our eternal destiny depends upon the outcome. I am sensible of the fact that there is something divine in me. I feel my heart moved at times with noble aims and purposes and aspirations. But, on the other hand, I am drawn down by my baser nature. The Son of God offers

his aid in determining this strife. He comes like the stranger who stood in Florence before the fowler's shop, fresh from the horrors of a Moslem prison, gazing on a cage of birds that were beating their poor wings against the bars; out of his paltry treasury, he purchased the cage and opened it and watched with a great joy the poor prisoners as they mounted skyward. Our Master has come to give freedom to the nobler aims and purposes that struggle within us, the "winged things," as Plato called them, to soar aloft in their native air free, free in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

II. *But this freedom has a more positive side.* We are delivered from the bondage of the law and from the tyranny of self, but unto what?

(1) *Christ makes us free in the glorious quest of truth.* A man is never so noble as when searching for truth, for its price is above rubies. The gold of Ophir cannot be compared with it.

No man is a true follower of Christ who is not in the best and highest sense a free-thinker. But this is not to say that in his pursuit of truth he refuses to recognize certain laws and limitations. How does a pirate ship differ from a merchantman? In having no "papers," in sailing by no chart. She is a rover of the seas, going hither and yon at her free will in search of plunder. Fire a shot across her bows and she hoists the black flag, which means that she sails under no governmental privileges and recognizes no authority. Is this the type of freedom? Nay, rather the merchant ship that sails along her appointed course under the protection of a national flag and engaged in legitimate commerce. A true free-thinker is indeed an adventurer; he does

not pause at those pillars of Hercules whereon is written, *Ne plus ultra*. To him there is always more beyond, and he sails forth to those new worlds which ever await a bold mariner in moral realms. But here as everywhere there must be a recognition of just authority. To this end we have received the Scriptures. The Bible is the chart we sail by. A "Thus saith the Lord" is the end of all controversy for us. His word is the truth that makes us free.

(2) *We are made free, furthermore, for the acquisition of character.* And character is the most desirable thing in all the world. There is nothing better than that a man should add grace to grace until he shall attain unto the fulness of moral stature. But in all this there must be a working basis. To this end again we have received the Scriptures; in these we have a moral code, a system of ethics so perfect that even the enemies of revelation are slow to find fault with it. To undertake the building of character without such an authoritative code is to court failure; hence the unveracity of the Arabs, the impurity of the Turks, the dishonesty of the Egyptians. It is not enough, however, that we shall have this ethical code; there must be somewhere a living illustration of it. An art student does not complete his course until he has passed through the life-class. He must see the living eyes of the model, the muscles in play or in repose. So we have Jesus the ideal man; the only one who ever lived on earth of whom it could be said, "He is as good as the law." He is our Exemplar in our effort to regain our lost glory,—the likeness of God. In him we find the free play of all our faculties along the lines of virtue and manhood. We make our best

progress toward character when we go looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

(3) *In Christ we are brought forth into the privileges of service.* Truth is of no value as an abstract thing. The graces of character are nothing in themselves. Gold and silver in bags are worthless, worthless until they be put into circulation for the feeding of the hungry, the clothing of the naked, and the carrying on of the industries of the world. The great matter is usefulness. How shall I invest my capital of truth and character so as to make them tell for myself, my fellow-men, and God?

Here again the Scriptures are our guide. They tell us of the kingdom. This word is indeed the key of the gospel. The Master speaks over and over of this Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Truth, the Kingdom of Righteousness, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. His word is, "Seek ye first of all the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the lower things shall be added unto you."

It is a critical point in the life of a young man or young woman when the question is reached, What trade or profession shall I choose? What shall be my life-work? There is a point in the higher life of every man when he is called upon to determine what shall be his nobler pursuit. The true answer is this: "Seek ye the kingdom of God." "His servants ye are, to whom ye obey." No one is free who is not the servant of God.

The highest possible point of manhood was reached in the experience of Jesus Christ when, putting the purple cup to his lips under the olive trees in Gethsemane, he cried, "O my Father, not my will but thine be done." When self is surrendered to the

highest and best, when the human will is brought into line with the divine will, when the soul is *en rapport* with all the wishes and purposes of the Mighty One, then man is free ; free to do only that which is best and noblest ; delivered from the bondage of the base and unworthy, unfettered from the law to glory in obedience. For the best definition of freedom is not lawlessness, but perfect obedience to perfect law.

The national symbol chosen by our fathers to represent the principle of civil and ecclesiastical freedom, for which they jeopardized their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor, was the eagle. Why? Because it has an eye to gaze undazzled at the mid-day beam. Because it has a heart of courage to make its home in the dizzy heights. Because it has a wing to catch the breath of the rarest ether and strong enough to defy the fiercest storm. The air is its home, its native element ; and here on poised wing it stands for freedom. A man is never free save in his element. Freedom is conformity to the laws of our being. I am free when law and truth and righteousness flow in the very current of my blood. I am free when I can say, "I rejoice to do thy will ; I will run in the way of thy commandments." "They which wait upon the Lord shall mount up as on eagle's wings. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." They are free forever, joyous and triumphant, because their lives are hid with Christ in God.



## THE SALVATION ARMY.

"And John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not with us: and we forbade him because he followeth not with us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me."—MARK IX. 38, 39.

The earthly life of Jesus was drawing rapidly to its close. "I must work while it is day," said he, "for the night cometh when no man can work." So much remained to be done! He was now on his last missionary journey. For the multiplying of his influence he endowed seventy of his followers with peculiar gifts of speech and healing, and sent them out among the villages of Galilee. It was a notable excursion. In due time the itinerants returned with a glowing report of their success: "Even the devils," they cried, "have been subject unto us!"

But one episode of that journey has its melancholy aspect. It is here related by John with peculiar zest: "We saw one casting out devils in thy name and we forbade him, for he followeth not with us." The Lord deliver us from bigotry—the bigotry that invented the rack and thumb-screw, that has kindled the fagots of a thousand human holocausts, that has set rivers of blood a-flowing, that alienates friends and fills the world with confusion. We are none of us wholly free from it, but some of us are lamentably full of it. Hark to the voices that cry, "The

temple of the Lord ! the temple of the Lord are we ! ”  
Poor souls—narrow contracted, intolerant. It was  
the thought of such ecclesiasticism as this that led  
Emerson to say,

“ I like a Church, I like a cowl,  
I love a prophet of the soul ;  
And on my heart monastic aisles  
Fall like sweet strains and pensive smiles :  
But not for all his faith can see,  
Would I that cowlèd Churchman be ! ”

The ways of the Salvation Army are not our ways,  
nor are its thoughts our thoughts, but for that mat-  
ter neither are God's ; and this is no reason why we  
should dogmatically disapprove and denounce them.  
We are living in a broad world whose circumference  
is 25,000 miles ; there is room enough for all to gang  
their ain gait without jostling. It is likely that the  
Salvation Army has blundered on many occasions,  
but in all this world of ours there is no such blunder  
as intolerance. Why should we find fault with those  
who are our brethren in the fellowship of great fun-  
damental truths and principles ? There are devils  
enough in the world and friends of the devil and  
soldiers of the devil, without our assailing those who  
are casting out devils in Jesus' name even though  
they “ follow not with us.”

I. *As to the origin of the Salvation Army.* The  
movement began in 1865.\* Its originator was the  
Reverend William Booth. God has always the right  
man for the hour. The clock struck and Saul of  
Tarsus said, “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ”

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\* This sermon was preached on the 30th Anniversary of the  
Organization of the Salvation Army.

The clock struck again and Peter the Hermit went to and fro waving the red cross banner and crying, *Deus vult*. Again the hour struck and Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the chapel door. The clock struck again and John Wesley was born. The clock struck once more and William Booth appeared and began his work. He had been a minister of the English Church and was frozen out; he had joined the Wesleyans only to find that he was unable, by the approved methods of that Church, to reach the great lapsed multitude. He cut loose now, became an independent minister and drifted to East London,—East London, where the unchurched masses most do congregate; the rendezvous of thieves and hoodlums, the home of the desolate and the abandoned.

Do you know East London? All efforts to penetrate its entrenched sin had been vain. A benevolent minister went down on a certain occasion with his "top coat" over his arm and began to preach. There was no difficulty in attracting a crowd. "I'll hold your coat, your Reverence," said one. "I'll hold your cane," said another. And still another, "I'll hold your hat." He preached with all earnestness and the spirit of exhortation, and at the close of his discourse looked about for his three servitors. Then his indignation burst forth: "I came down here at considerable inconvenience to do you good," said he, "and you have stolen my hat and my top coat and my gold-headed cane. I wash my hands of you. I give you over to your fate. The Lord have mercy on you." This was the neighborhood toward which William Booth now turned his attention and with such success that we are beginning to think that

possibly he has solved that long-vexed problem, "How to Win the Masses."

II. *The name of the Salvation Army.* Observe, it does not profess to be a church. We believe in the Church as a divine institution. *Ecclesia* is a great word and it accurately characterizes the goodly fellowship—those who are "called out" from the world to serve God. It is to be lamented, not that the Salvation Army does not call itself a church, but that it has not more distinctly avowed its friendly attitude toward the universal Church of Christ. As it celebrates no sacraments, it would appear reasonable that it should encourage all its converts to sit down in the fellowship of those who in the various churches keep the last injunction of their Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me."

But why an "army"? Because there's war. Did not Christ come into the world, you say, to reign as Shiloh, Prince of Peace? Did not the angels sing his welcome, "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth toward men of good will"? Aye. But he also said, "I am come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword." His purpose is indeed pacific toward the children of men; but as to the powers of darkness his gospel means war to the blade, war to the hilt, war to the death, war without quarter, war without compromise, a continuous assault upon the strongholds of iniquity, an unremitting effort to destroy the works of the devil. No peace, but incessant war until the gates of heaven shall open and the last reinforcements shall come forth—One riding in front in garments dipped in blood, having upon his vesture and thigh a name written, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; and following after him a great multitude on

white horses and robed in white, their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb. Then the great dragon and his hosts and the clash of armies in mid-heaven. Then the gaping pit and the smoke of torment ascending up and the cry, Babylon is fallen! And then the throne set above all thrones and Jesus coming to reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run. No peace until then, and afterwards peace forever. Meanwhile, the churches all have need of the rigid and unquestioning obedience of military service. To "join the Church" is indeed enlistment, and there is no discharge in this war. He is the blessed one who can say like Paul at the outer verge of life, "I have fought a good fight; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day."

III. *As to the principles of the Salvation Army.* We are not likely to agree with General Booth and his followers in all particulars of doctrine, but they are right with respect to the great granite truths. It is doubtful if they would endorse all the five points of Calvinism; but they have five doctrinal tenets which are beyond all controversy, as follows:

(1) Sin. They believe in sin. How could it be otherwise? The parish of the Salvation Army is the slums; sin there exists in its most flagrant and abhorrent form; sin in rags and poverty, sin hungry and cadaverous, sin under the ban of society, sin with the prison mold upon it, the sin of the prodigal son in the far country feeding swine, sin as Milton painted it,

"Black it stood as night,  
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart."

(2) Hell. There is no modification of the nomenclature of retribution. Hell, the word that characterizes the penalty of sin, the fire unquenchable, the worm that gnaws and gnaws and gnaws and never dies, the outer darkness of lonely reproach and divine abandonment, shame, remorse for ever and ever.

(3) Revelation. The Salvation Army believes in the Bible. It does not devote itself to the study of the outward form of Scripture. It has nothing to say with respect to the Higher Criticism. It cares nothing about inductive and deductive methods. It does not worry itself as to the mode of inspiration. The sin-stricken multitude who form the constituency of the Salvation Army are concerned about such great questions as, "What shall we do to be saved?" and "How shall God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly?" and that tremendous problem, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" And they say, "Here is a Book which professes an answer to those heart-rending questions. Let us open it and see." The beggar who stands in front of Delmonico's does not devote his attention to the urns of fragrant bloom beside the doorway or to the gorgeous livery of the men in waiting there; his eyes are fixed upon the tables within, and what he wants is food. So is it with the great multitude who pass by our church doors and who constitute the parish of the Salvation Army; deep down in their hearts they are asking the way of everlasting life. The Bible is nothing to them except as it answers this need.

" Within this sacred Volume lies  
The mystery of mysteries ;

Happiest they of human race  
To whom the Lord hath given grace  
To read, to think, to fear, to pray,  
To lift the latch and force the way."

In addition to the foregoing truths there are two others which are emblematically written upon the banners of this organization—red banners bearing the legend, Fire and Blood.

(4) Blood: the blood of Jesus Christ who gave himself for us. The veterans of the armies of the Civil War have been marching through the streets. They are proud of their membership in the Grand Army of the Republic. God bless the Grand Army. But they will bear me witness that it was not their imposing parades, not their martial music, not their gorgeous uniforms, not their waving banners that saved the country. It was blood that saved the country;—the blood of Colonel Ellsworth, the blood of the rank and file, the blood of Abraham Lincoln; an awful trail of blood from the streets of Baltimore westward to the Mississippi, southward staining the waters of that great flood to its mouth, and north and east again to the gates of Richmond. I say nothing against the historic creeds and ethical codes of the universal Church when I declare that God's power unto salvation abides not in them. We are saved by our "grip on the blood"; by a vital faith in the atoning power of the blood of Jesus that cleanseth from all sin.

(5) Fire: a reference to the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire on the day of Pentecost. On that memorable occasion the Spirit rested upon the foreheads of the disciples in lambent flame. The expression is significant, "Tongues of fire." The men and

women of the Salvation Army are all instructed that they are to be witnesses for Christ. The enthusiasm of their conversion must be made to express itself in open avowal. The "testimonies" of these converts is often of the rudest sort. I have heard them in the slums of our own cities, in our frontier towns, in an open square in Ayrshire. I followed the drums one night to Seven Dials in London and there heard such testimonies to God's goodness—in expressions wholly innocent of grammar and rhetoric—by men and women whose faces were scarred with the memorials of vice—such testimonies as might make an angel weep for joy.

IV. *As to the methods of the Salvation Army.* These are all briefly comprehended in the aphorism, "Anything to win the souls of men."

(1) "Go out after the people." Go out into the streets, into the purlieus, up into the attics, down into the basement, into the uttermost slums; anywhere to get your audience. "First catch your hare." Go out with drums and tambourines and popular airs. Go out like the Pied Piper of Hamelin:

" From street to street he piped advancing,  
And step by step they followed dancing."

Then to the barracks! Before we criticise, let us seriously inquire if this plan is not wisely adapted to the circumstances of the case. Your fishermen on the coast of Maine when they go out after mackerel take with them a bucket of toll-bait—minced menhaden; on reaching the deep water they scatter the toll-bait generously on either side of the boat; and lo, the fish come following after. The drum and fife of the Salvation Army are their toll-bait, and the wisdom of



this method is demonstrated by the success which has attended it.

(2) "Get the attention of the people and hold it." On reaching the barracks there is no moment of dullness. The drum and the volley and the knee drill and the popular air keep the audience constantly on the *qui vive*. Prayers and testimonies are brief. Attention is not suffered to flag for a instant. Sidney Smith said, "A sparrow fluttering in the church is an antagonist whom the profoundest theologian in Europe cannot master." We may not be able to use the methods of the Salvation Army in holding the attention of our people; but why should we? At the recent intercollegiate sports I observed that the sprinting matches were announced by the firing of a gun, which turned every eye in the great assemblage toward the athletes. Everything in its place. The firing of a gun for a similar purpose would be malapropos in this company. Our friends of the Salvation Army are not seeking to win the people who are in habitual attendance at Fifth Avenue churches. They adapt their methods to their parish.

(3) "Clinch the impression here and now." The man who falls into the clutches of the Salvation Army is not allowed to escape until all resources are exhausted in bringing him to final and decisive acceptance of Christ. He is personally importuned. He is persuaded to take his place among the "seekers" in the foremost seats, and when under conviction he is exhorted to persist until he is sensible his sins are forgiven. Then the testimony; he rises and confesses the goodness of God, and the drums beat and the banners wave and the barracks are filled with hallelujahs. This, however, is only the beginning. He is

now in the hands of zealous and prayerful friends. By night and day they accompany him and hold him. They put on him the uniform of the Army, so that wherever he goes, it is as if his forehead bore the name of his new Master.

A few years ago, on a visit to the home of my boyhood, I was conversing with a few familiar friends, when a man wearing the uniform drew near. "You do not know me?" he said; "I am Ben Jones." I knew him then, for we had been at the old red school-house together. As the years passed on I had heard of his wild life. I had seen his name upon the dead walls as a clown in a travelling show. He continued, "I understand you do not approve the methods of the Salvation Army. Let me tell you about myself. A year ago a Salvation lass invited me to the barracks, and I went. For more than six months I had not slept in a bed, but in the stalls with the horses or anywhere. I could scarcely remember knowing a sober day or hour. But at the barracks they persuaded me to come forward and they prayed over me; and I believe that Jesus Christ forgave my sins that night; and I have worn this uniform ever since, and the lads and lasses of the Salvation Army have stood by me; and by God's grace I mean to be faithful in serving the Lord who has redeemed me until you and I shall stand together in the great multitude around His throne." And what could I say to that? All my prejudices were dissipated in a moment. All my objections fell flat in the presence of a man who had felt the power of God.

There is a lesson here for the people of the churches. Our opposition to the methods of the Salvation Army has practically disappeared. We are all now with

one accord approving them ; indeed I am not sure that our approval is not too generous. We are glad to have the Salvation Army going down into the slums after the lapsed masses. Let us be assured, however, that we cannot farm out our own responsibility in this way. The duty of reaching the unchurched multitudes still rests upon the churches. Let it no longer be said as a reproach against us that we die of respectability. Our doors must be open to the strangers. The hospitality of our sanctuaries must be extended to the man in mean apparel ; and more than that, we must heed the injunction as addressed not to the Salvation Army only but to us : "Go out into the highways and hedges and constrain them to come in." It is urged against these zealous people that they create an undue excitement, not only in their own places of service, but in the open streets. In like manner it was said of Paul and his friends when they came to Thessalonica, "These that turned the world upside down are come hither also." O that the time were hastened when that reproach should be brought against all the churches of Christ, that they turn the world upside down. For, alas! this is a topsy-turvey world : sin has turned it wrong side up, and to turn it upside down is indeed to turn it right side up.

Finally, here is a lesson for the impenitent soul. Why all this commotion? Why this building of churches and preaching of the gospel? Is it much ado about nothing? You have observed how easily a crowd can be gathered upon any of our thoroughfares. If a man has fallen into an excavation, they gather from everywhere ; scores of interested and excited people enquiring for the doctors, for the ambu-

lances. You yourself draw near and crowd toward the centre to find what has happened, and are as eager as anybody to render help. The Salvation Army is such a crowd; somebody has fallen into a pit, they have gathered to help him. What eagerness! O what earnestness! But how does this concern you? You are the man in the pit!

All are in earnest except the sinner himself, who should indeed be most concerned. God is in earnest. God's only begotten Son is in dead earnest, insomuch as he has made bare his arm on Calvary for the deliverance of the lost. Mothers are praying, preachers exhorting, armies bearing the red-cross banner are marching to and fro. All are in earnest; all but you, good friend, and you are most concerned. Suppose you think about it.

## THE COVENANTERS.

“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.”—REV. ii. 10.

It will serve our convenience in a brief survey of the history of the Covenanters of Scotland to remember a trio of important dates. *The first is 1517* when, as everybody knows, Luther nailed up his ninety-five theses on the chapel door at Wittemberg and preached his notable sermon on Justification—the doctrine of a standing or a falling church—taking for his text, “The just shall live by faith.” At this time Patrick Hamilton, a youth of extraordinary endowments, was being educated in Scotland for the Church. The writings of Luther and other continental reformers fell into his hands and he determined to look farther into the great doctrines which lie at the foundation of personal and ecclesiastical freedom. He visited the continent and made the acquaintance of Luther and Melancthon. On returning to Scotland he began to preach, but the fulminations of Rome followed him. He was arrested, tried and summarily sentenced to die the next day. He met his doom bravely, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” This marks the dawn of the Reformation in Scotland. An ambassador of the English throne, in reporting the defections of the Scottish people, afterwards said “The smoke of Patrick Hamilton hath infected the land.”

*The second of the important dates is 1557.* This was a year of signs and wonders. A comet was thought to be a fiery dragon vomiting flames, whales of uncommon size were cast upon the shore, and there were other tokens of approaching calamity. Mary of Scotland was at this time in France plotting with her mother the Queen Dowager for the supremacy of Rome. A conference was held at Edinburgh among the friends of the reformed doctrine to devise plans for averting the threatened papistical calamities. The Earl of Argyle was there, James Douglas and John Erskine ; in this conference was drawn up the first of the Solemn Leagues and Covenants in which the Protestants of Scotland pledged themselves to stand by one another for better, for worse, in defence of the freedom of the divine Word. This Covenant formed the basis of all similar instruments which were afterwards drawn up ; it was the Magna Charta of Scottish freedom. It gave the signal for the beginning of a long struggle marked for many years by fire and blood, but destined to end in glorious victory ;

“ For freedom’s battle once begun,  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

*The third of the important dates is 1572.* This is universally known as the year of the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s. Let it also be remembered as the year when John Knox entered into his rest. He had long before, on graduation from the University at Glasgow, embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. The smoke of Patrick Hamilton had infected him. He was deposed from his professorship in the university by Rome, but continued to preach the gospel

of grace. He was sentenced to exile and the galleys ; for eighteen weary months he was chained to the oars in France ; then he returned and, with his life in his hands, resumed the preaching of the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. In vain did his former friends endeavor to turn him aside from the path of duty ; he was offered a bishopric and declined it. There is no more heroic figure in history than that of John Knox going up to Holyrood with his Genevan cloak over his shoulders and his Bible under his arm, to remonstrate with his Queen for usurping an unjust authority. When obliged to give up for a time the functions of his ministry, he took occasion to visit Geneva where he conferred with John Calvin ; then back again to Edinburgh and the preaching of Christ. It was now 1572. The news of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's was brought to Edinburgh, and Knox for the last time entered his pulpit to thunder forth his indignation against the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. He climbed the stairs of his home—the home where every tourist pauses to-day to read the legend, “Lufe God above all and your neighbor as yourself”—and presently, having fought the good fight and finished his course, fell on sleep. It was a splendid tribute that was paid to him by the regent who, standing above his open grave, said : “Here lies one who never feared the face of man.”

Thus far the opposition to ecclesiastical freedom in Scotland had come from Rome. The issue was now to be changed and Scotland's enemy was henceforth to be the English Church. The conflict took its rise in the introduction of a new “Book of Canons” prepared by Charles I. and Archbishop Laud. The

King ordered that this book should be used in the Scottish Kirk; by this the Kirk of Scotland would obviously be placed under the domination of a foreign hierarchy. It involved a vast stretch of the royal prerogative and was offensive to all. The prayer-book of Archbishop Laud was to supersede the Genevan liturgy which had been introduced by Knox. In this new formulary there was a distinct recognition of baptismal regeneration and there were also prayers for the dead. It was indeed substantially the same as the Roman Catholic Missal. The Archbishop had determined, as he said, "to make the stubborn Kirk of Scotland stoop"; but he reckoned without his host. He did not know the mettle of the Scottish people. On the day appointed for the introduction of this liturgy, the Dean of St. Giles in Edinburgh had begun to read the service when a strange thing happened. Down below sat Jenny Geddes, her soul growing more and more indignant by reason of this papistical mummary, until she suddenly arose and, throwing her stool at the officiating clergyman, cried "Dost thou say mass at my lug?" In the confusion that followed the Dean gathered his skirts and vanished. This was the beginning of a long campaign against prelacy and the prayer-book. No less than sixty-eight petitions were addressed to the throne representing that the Church of Scotland was by definite act of Parliament a free and independent church. The King refused to listen; further protests were forbidden; the right of public assemblage was denied. A crisis was fast approaching.

*At this point it will serve us to remember another trio of important dates. The first of these is 1638.*



This was the year of the renewal of the Solemn League and Covenant. It occurred in Grayfriars Kirk, where nobility and commons, ministers and laymen, with uplifted hands pledged fealty to one another in support of its solemn principles. The people had come from all quarters between the Tay and Tweed. When the leaders in Grayfriars had affixed their signatures, the parchment was brought out in the kirk-yard and laid upon a grave-stone; then the multitudes came, and, with a solemn apprehension of all that it might involve, signed,—some of them with their own blood and others adding, “until death.” This was followed by a General Assembly of the Church in Glasgow at which the Book of Canons was condemned and bishops were declared to have no authority. The king’s ambassador in vain tried to dissolve the assemblage under pain of treason. The hour of adjournment having been reached, the last words were spoken: “We have now cast down the wall of Jericho. Let him who rebuilds them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite.” The King on hearing of these proceedings was beside himself with anger. He prepared an army and set out for Scotland. The flaming cross was kindled on the hill tops to arouse the people. The Covenanters soon enlisted three thousand men under the command of George Leslie, “a little old crooked man,” who had distinguished himself under Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years’ War. They raised the bonny blue flag bearing the legend: “For Christ’s Crown and Covenant.” The two armies met at Dunse-law. The King confronted a camp all resonant with psalmody; he surveyed the Covenanters as they knelt in prayer; saw the legend upon their blue banner; marked the

valor flaming in their eyes; and concluded that discretion was the better part of valor. In the conference that followed, he promised a free parliament and the full rights of the Scottish Kirk,—a promise which, as subsequent events showed, he fully intended to break. But fortunately at this time he found himself involved in other affairs which left him no time to waste upon these covenanting cattle of moss and moor.

*It was now 1649.* Cromwell arose; the man from the fens of England with his army of Roundheads. The Civil War was on. King and Parliament were clinched for a death-struggle. Meanwhile for eleven blessed years the Scottish people had peace.

*The last of these important dates is 1660,* known to all as the year of the Restoration. Charles II. came to the throne under a deliberate pledge to support the Solemn League and Covenant; but what cared he for oaths or covenants. The people of Scotland rejoiced over his accession and sent James Sharpe as their ambassador to congratulate him; this man turned traitor and was made president of the Court of High Commission,—a star chamber of which it has been written “No man ever brought before it, was known to escape condemnation.” It is needless to dwell upon the persecutions that followed. The brave defenders of the League and Covenant were exposed to imprisonment, torture and banishment. Women were publicly whipped through the streets; ministers were branded on the faces, sold into slavery or burned at Edinburgh Cross. The churches were empty; the jails were full.

At this time four memorable acts were passed in Parliament, aimed at the complete overthrow of the Scottish Kirk. The *first* of these was known as the

"Act Rescissory " by which the Solemn League and Covenant was disannulled and all laws for the protection of the rights of worship were swept away. The *second* is known as the "Drunkard's Act," by which four bishops were ordained to take control of the Scottish kirk, and all ministers, except such as submitted to their power, were prohibited from discharging the functions of their office. Those who did not submit to prelatical order were banished. In pursuance of this procedure two hundred ministers took solemn leave of their parishes and a little later four hundred more were ejected for non-conformity. The *third* of the parliamentary acts was known as the "Drag Net," which was intended to prevent conventicles ; that is, public services held elsewhere than in sanctuaries. No minister was permitted to preach or pray except in his own family. A reward of thirty pounds was offered for the arrest of ministers violating this ordinance ; and immunity was promised in case a minister was slain while resisting it. The penalty of obduracy was death and confiscation. All must attend upon the ministration of the curates. The *fourth* was the "Mile Act," by which it was ordered that ministers must remove to a distance of at least twenty miles from their parishes within a time limit of twenty days.

In spite of these repressive measures and of the sufferings, confiscations and deaths that ensued, the conventicles went on. The people met in the valleys and in the glens of the mountains ; around the rude pulpit were gathered the nobility and peasantry, with shepherds from the Lammermoors in their gray-checked plaids ; the horses were picketed in the rear so that if worship should be interrupted, the women

might speedily escape ; in front of the congregation the arms were stacked. Here the God-fearing people of Scotland, during this lamentable season of persecution, whispered their prayers and sang their praises with muffled voices.

“ Their preachers silenced and deposed,  
The house of prayer against them closed,  
They on the mountain heath reposed:  
But though in great perplexity,

“ Their harps were not on willows hung,  
But still in tune and ready strung,  
Till mountain echoes round them rung  
To songs of joyful melody.

“ Though from their friends and home exiled,  
Lone wanderers in the desert wild,  
The wilderness around them smiled;  
For Heaven approved their constancy.”

Then came Claverhouse, “bloody Claverhouse” —a name forever detestable and accursed. He led his troops over all the West, harrying and burning and torturing and slaying. He rode down conventicles until the fetlocks of his horses were red. He waylaid the peasants at their innocent toil and left them lifeless on the moor. Bloody Claverhouse! A name to frighten Scottish children with to this day. The name of the wicked shall rot.

The struggle reached its consummation in the battle of Bothwell Brig. Unfortunately the Covenanters had wasted precious time in foolish dissensions, and they had not two charges of ammunition apiece. The battle was short and sharp. The Scotch were cut down like wheat before the sickle; the cry was, “Kill! kill! no quarter!” Twelve hundred prisoners were taken; some were tortured, not accepting

deliverance ; some were hanged and their bodies allowed to rot on the gibbet in chains. The captives were marched to Edinburgh and penned in a corner of Grayfriars kirk-yard in sight of the very grave-stone on which, twenty years before, the eldest of them had signed the Solemn League and Covenant. Here for five weary months they were confined with no couch but the earth and no coverlet but the sky; a few of them recanted, many of them died, and the remnant, two hundred and fifty-seven in all, were transported to the West Indies to be sold into slavery. But God in mercy aroused the tempest and the ship that carried them was wrecked; the captain refused to allow the hatches to be opened and all but fifty went down in the sea.

The "killing-time" lasted for twenty-eight years, during which Defoe says that no less than eighteen thousand of the bravest of the Scottish people died for the faith. The supporters of the Solemn League and Covenant came to be known as "Wanderers." They hid in dens and caves of the earth. If they were captured, it was to suffer the boot and thumb-kins and shameful death. To entertain them was a capital crime. Brother was required to deliver up brother to death; fathers were banished for sheltering their sons. Among the bravest of those who suffered during this lamentable time was Richard Cameron, whose crime was refusing to say, "God save the king." His answer was, "How can I say God save the king, without being partaker of his evil deeds?" He was publicly excommunicated and hunted like a partridge among the hills; a price was put upon his head. He went to and fro holding field preachings and praying God to spare his life that he

might preach the glorious gospel to the poor people among the glens. At length he was surprised while leading a conventicle; thrice he made his famous prayer, "Lord, spare the green and take the ripe!" He was slain and his head and hands were cut off. These ghastly tokens were carried to his aged father. Being asked "Dost thou know to whom these belong?" the old man answered, "To my son"; then taking them and kissing them, "To my own dear son. It is God's will. He hath made goodness and mercy follow us all our days."

There is nothing to be gained by prolonging the lamentable story. It was brought to a close at length by the coming of William of Orange. He came from the east, from the Hollow Land, where a brave people had beaten back the sea and the Spanish Fury—the only land where at this period the conflict of civil and ecclesiastical freedom had been fought to a finish—the only land on earth where men were free to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. He came to cut off the House of Stuart. Now conditions were reversed; the prelates were drummed out of the reformed parishes, the psalms were revived in worship, and from the coming of William of Orange until this day the Scottish people have dwelt in peace, every man under his own vine and fig tree.

But was it not a small matter, you say, to fight so long and sturdily over a mere trifle? Was it not a matter of slight importance whether Knox's litany or Laud's prayer-book should be used in the Scottish Kirk? It was indeed, says the historian Hume, "an inoffensive litany." Ay; but this question was drawn along the lines of a tremendous principle.

The question was one of civil and ecclesiastical freedom ; the rights of conscience were involved in it ; the freedom of worship was involved in it ; an open Bible was involved in it. *Sto pro veritate !* The Scottish people were right in pledging their lives to the vindication of truth, and history has vindicated their cause. There is no country on earth which has had so overpowering an influence in the advancement of civil and religious rights. Ay ; man or nation, stand for the truth. Let no man take thy crown. *Stand fast, Crag Ellachie !*

It is a true saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." They do not die in vain who die in a glorious cause. The loss of honor, the loss of self-respect, the loss of freedom, is far beyond the loss of earthly goods or life. We are the stronger by reason of the courage of these Covenanters who adventured all upon the justice of their cause. Is there one among us whose heart does not thrill in remembrance of John Knox's daughter, Jane Welch, who journeyed far to entreat her king for the deliverance of her exiled husband ? He answered, "Ay, madam, one little word will release him. Let him but say, 'I am wrong'"; and she held up her apron with her two hands and said, "Sire, I would rather catch his head here !" It is courage like hers that nerves us to meet the strongest trials and sorrows of life.

A few years ago I stood in Grayfriars kirk-yard. In the felons' corner were the bodies of the martyrs intermingled with the dust of thieves and murderers. On the face of the monument was this inscription :

“ Halt, passenger, take heed what you do see.  
This tomb doth shew for what some men did die.  
Here lies the dust of those who stood  
'Gainst perjury, resisting unto blood,  
Adhering to the Covenants, and laws  
Establishing the same, which was the cause  
Their lives were sacrificed unto the lust  
Of prelates adjured. Though here their dust  
Lies mixed with murderers and other crew  
Whom justice justly did to death pursue :  
But as for them, no cause was to be found  
Worthy of death ; but only they were found  
Constant and steadfast, zealous witnessing  
For the prerogatives of *Christ their King* :—  
Which truths were sealed by famous Guthrie's head ;  
And all along to Mr. Renwick's blood  
They did endure the wrath of enemies,  
Reproaches, torments, deaths, and injuries.  
But yet they're those who from such troubles came  
And now triumph in the glory with the Lamb.”

While I stood reverently before those words an old Scotchman, familiar with the kirk-yard, was beside me. I pointed to a mound and said, “ Whose grave is this ? ” “ I do not know. ” “ And whose is this ? ” “ I do not know. ” “ Is there no record of their names ? ” “ Nowhere on earth. ” But what matters it, good friends, so long as we are confident of this, that the names of all who have been faithful unto death are in the Book of Life—that they are written on the palms of His hands close by the nail-print that tells of the most glorious martyrdom that ever was known. He never forgets.



## THE SIX SORROWS OF ST. PAUL.

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities."—II. COR. xi. 30.

The Sanhedrin was the governing body of Israel. It embraced within itself legislative, executive and judicial functions. It made the laws and enforced them and it was the court of last appeal. It consisted of seventy-two members. The highest honor in Jewry was to be elected to this august body.

Seven years after the ascension of our Lord there was among the illustrious gray-beards of the Sanhedrin a young man of remarkable gifts and culture. He was not above thirty-three years of age, but, having distinguished himself for learning at Gamaliel's school, he had already been made a Rabbi. Since his election to membership in this venerable body he had shown a remarkable zeal for the Jewish faith. On all sides a glorious future was predicted for him.

At this time—37 A.D.—the Sanhedrin was greatly perplexed with reference to the religion of the Nazarene Prophet. The crucifixion of Jesus, which it had been hoped would put an utter end to this pestilent heresy, had been futile. Since that event his disciples had multiplied ; on a single Pentecostal occasion not less than three thousand had been added to their number. The new religion was making itself

conspicuous, particularly in the synagogues and at the great festivals. It was obvious that something must be done forthwith to arrest it. The mind of the Sanhedrists was favorable to the setting up of an inquisition. It was resolved to burn out the heresy. Saul of Tarsus, the young Sanhedrist, was chosen chief inquisitor; he was in no wise averse to the task. He "made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." Learning that the religion of the Nazarene was making rapid strides in the city of Damascus, he directed his attention that way.

At noon Saul, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," was riding with a company of horsemen along the highway to Damascus, when a great thing happened which changed the current of his life. A light from heaven fell upon him above the brightness of the sun and he fell to the earth blinded. A voice said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" The voice replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"; and Saul, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Up to this time the life of Saul of Tarsus seems to have been one of uninterrupted prosperity. But with his new life he began to tread the narrow road of suffering—a lane without a turning, until he entered upon his eternal rest.

*The first of Paul's sorrows was the temporary blindness which befell him at his conversion.* It was not without a purpose that this darkness closed him in. He was blindfolded for initiation into the mysteries of the gospel of Christ.

It is not an extraordinary thing for God to seclude his people in this way; closing their eyes to the outer world in order that they may look in upon themselves and upward to him. John Milton dreamed of creating a glorious epic, but his dream would never have been realized, had not God withdrawn him, as he says, from the pleasures of youth and the vapors of wine, and curtained his soul in blindness. Then came his visions of the celestial world. Of all he ever wrote, there is nothing more beautiful than his "Ode on my Blindness."

"When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent, which is death to hide,  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul were bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide;  
'Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?'  
I fondly ask: But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait.'"

While Saul of Tarsus was thus temporarily shut up within himself he saw some things which otherwise would never have come to him. He perceived, to begin with, that all his former life had been wrong; that his energies had been misdirected and wasted. He saw again the face of Stephen, to whose death he had consented, shining like an angel's face as he lifted it toward heaven under the shower of stones hurled upon him outside the wall, and heard him cry: "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man stand-

ing on the right hand of God." He saw how grievously he himself had misunderstood the prophet of Nazareth. He had thought of him as a root out of dry ground, having no form nor comeliness nor beauty that he should desire him. Now he knew that this Jesus was the very Christ, the long-looked-for Messiah of Israel, the veritable Son of God. He saw him chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely; the disguised King. He knew now that the story of his resurrection was no fable, for he had seen Jesus in light and glory unapproachable, the very Jesus whom he had hated and whose followers he had persecuted unto death, now reigning in the heaven of heavens, having upon his vesture and thigh a name written: "King of Kings and Lord of Lords!" While he meditated upon these things sadly, and yet with the dawning joy of a great discovery, one of the followers of the Nazarene stood beside him, saying, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight"; his eyes were opened and, behold, the world was new; the new Presence had come into it, and henceforth Saul of Tarsus would know nothing but Christ and him crucified. From this time onward he was to go about declaring that this Jesus is the Christ. Was his a singular experience? Nay; the world is new to every soul when the living Christ has entered into it.

*The second of Paul's sorrows was surrender; for now, like a captive king who puts off his crown and purple and passes under the yoke, he lays down all. If ever a man knew the meaning of unconditional surrender at the beginning of the new life it was this Saul of Tarsus. A great gulf opened between him and the past. He was disowned and ostracized; home, kindred, former friendships, all gone. Those who had*

been proud of knowing him now passed him on the street without a word of greeting. The fond dreams and ambitions of his former years were gone. No more looking forward to preferment in the Sanhedrin; no more thought of immortality in the chronicles of Israel. Saul of Tarsus had thrown away his opportunity; he had fallen in with the company of those who followed the crucified carpenter. The pride of his Jewish birthright and the honor of his Roman citizenship were gone. He must begin life over again and build on a new foundation. Most lamentable was the loss of his former religious connections, his ecclesiastical birthright. How he had loved the temple and its imposing ceremonial! How he had loved the Talmud and its rabbinical lore!

And was there compensation for this loss? He stood within the temple and saw its walls receding; he felt himself in a vaster and more glorious fabric. *Ecclesia!* The Church! The great assembly of all who love truth and righteousness. The walls of separation are down; the veil is rent asunder; the doors are open wide; a voice is heard, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth"; and the voice of the goodly fellowship responds, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all." The soul of the new convert is exalted to an unspeakable joy. Ring out the old! ring in the new! A world of new interests opens before him. Truth, righteousness and benevolence are everything now. The face of his new Master shines above and there is no trace of sorrow in the words with which he responds: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and

do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith : that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

*The third of his sorrows was poverty.* It would appear that he was the son of a well-to-do family in Tarsus ; but if so, by the Jewish custom, he was now stripped of his patrimony—"cut off with a shilling." As a Rabbi he had received his livelihood from the temple treasury ; this also was gone. And what had he to fall back upon? Fortunately it was required that every Jewish boy should learn a trade, and Saul, in his early life, had learned the art of tent-making. At Corinth he applies for work at the shop of Aquila and Priscilla, and there we find him plying his needle. The white hands of Gamaliel's scholar are callous with toil, but he assures us that in all this he rejoices that he was "chargeable to no man." While working with his needle he preached the gospel to his shop-mates ; when working hours were over he found his way to the synagogue and there reasoned with the people that Jesus was the Christ.

And what was his compensation for this loss of patrimony and competence, for this reduction to the level of common toil? "I have all things and

abound," says he. Oh, the riches of grace! the unsearchable riches of Christ! Riches! Riches! Riches! Every day brought its reward, a penny at evening. A penny only! Ay; but it bore the image and the superscription of the King. The smile of the Master made his penny more than the millionaire's wealth. It is said that Han Qua of Peking is worth sixteen hundred millions of dollars. Go into his vaults and look about you; gold, silver, in bags and boxes, thousands, millions—nothing! Nothing to the riches of grace. Dust and ashes. Go out of these vaults of perishable treasure and stand beside the Apostle and hear him rhapsodize on the immeasurable wealth of the kingdom: the hills are all of silver, the rivers are molten gold, the stars of night are Koh-i-noors, and all are his and all are mine and all are yours, if Christ is ours. "All things," says Paul, "are yours; the world, life, death, things present, things to come, all are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

*The fourth of his sorrows was his thorn in the flesh.* It is not of supreme importance that we should know precisely what this was. It may have been a dimness of sight, a lingering trace of the blindness that befell him on the Damascus highway. It may have been, as Cajetan says, "a hostile angel sent of Satan to buffet him." It may have been a besetting sin, a passion or appetite coming over from the old life and ever striving to get the better of him. Whatever it was, he tells us he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him and the Lord said, "Nay; but my grace shall be sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This was better than the removal of the cause. They tell us that the Gold Cure takes away the appetite for drink,

but God in his grace does that which is far better ; he leaves the appetite, but gives a man the power to overcome it. Is there a greater joy in all human life than this,—to beat down our baser nature and triumph over it ? Is not this manhood ? Is not this the very summit of character ?

So says the Apostle : “ I will most gladly glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me : I will take pleasure in my infirmities, for when I am weak then I am strong.” Grace is Paul’s sign-manual ; his fourteen Epistles close with it. There is nothing better in the world than the gift of this heavenly grace. This is that “ fragrant myrtle ” of which Pliny speaks, “ If it be held in the hand, it will sustain strength and relieve all weariness.” “ I can do all things,” says Paul, “ through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

*The fifth of his sorrows was persecution.* This began with his excommunication. He was branded as an apostate. Then the long catalogue of suffering : “ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one ; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils of the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness— if I must needs glory, I will glory in the things which concern mine infirmities ! ”

In all these he was comforted by the thought that he was thus received into the fellowship of his Lord : “ I rejoice,” he says, “ in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.”



The marks of his suffering are the scars of an honorable service under a glorious captain: "Henceforth," he cries, "let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

On one occasion, when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, a certain prophet named Agabus took the Apostle's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said: "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and deliver him into the hands of his foes." Then the friends of the Apostle began to entreat him not to continue his ominous journey, to which he answered: "What mean ye to weep and break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." He counted this to be his chiefest honor; to be permitted to enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, that he might also reign with him.

*The last of his sorrows was restraint.* If ever a man needed room, it was Paul. Yet much of his life was spent in prison; under restrictions so narrow that he could touch the borders of his parish with his finger tips. Two years in prison in Cesarea; two years in the Prætorian Camp at Rome; a further season of confinement, probably in the Mammertine jail. Meanwhile he was by no means idle. Out of his prison door went his Epistles like leaves fluttering from the tree of life. He preached the gospel to the guard who was chained to his wrist. His rejoicing was, that despite his own fetters and manacles, the word of God was not bound.

Then he was summoned before Nero the Lion. He laments that on this occasion no man stood with him but all forsook him, and adds, "Notwith-

standing the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." It is said that the presence of Garibaldi, during his Italian campaign, was of inestimable value to his brave men. The battle over, he passed through the hospitals where the wounded were groaning and shrieking; and when he laid his hand upon the fevered brow, the patient would look up, and murmuring, "Garibaldi!" would set his teeth and suffer in silence. So was the heart of Paul strengthened by his Lord's presence in the supreme hour of need.

On the occasion of his first trial Paul was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion; but after a brief respite, he was summoned again before the Imperial Court. Then came the death sentence, but the Lord stood with him and strengthened him. He was led out beyond the walls to the place of execution; on one side of him stood the headsman with his gleaming sword, on the other side stood his Lord strengthening him and saying, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life"; the sword flashed for an instant, fell—and the next moment Paul the Apostle beheld the King in his beauty.

One lesson: "No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; but in the end it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." We are asked, "Does God send trouble?" No and yes. He is a poor father who will not, on occasion, chasten his children for their good. It is safe to say, nevertheless, that much the larger portion of our sorrow comes not from above, but from the Prince of Darkness who desires to buffet us. Let us rejoice, however, in the assurance that God is stronger than Satan and able to overrule all his designing, so that all things shall

be made to work together for our good, if we love God. Were it not for these sorrows that befall us we should be like the bees of Barbadoes. Darwin says that these little insects, having been taken thither for the advantage of the luxuriant flora, found the weather so fine and the perfume so abundant, that they became profligate after the first year, ate up their capital, and worked no more, but went flying about like indolent butterflies. Let us, glory, therefore, in our infirmities, for in them the strength of God rests upon us. A great joy awaits those who subsidize all the conditions of this present life to the building up of character and goodness. "I reckon," says Paul—and he was quite competent to speak in these premises, having considered the matter pro and con out of a rich personal experience—"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

## HE SHALL SO COME.

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”—Acts i. 9, 10.

Scene: the Mount of Olives. Time: forty days after Christ's resurrection. A group of friends have come together by his appointment. While waiting for his appearance they speak in low murmurs of the years that are past, so eventful in toil and suffering and full of glorious promise. They speak of the future: it may be that their Lord will at this time proclaim his earthly sovereignty; possibly this is the meaning of this appointment to-day; he will lead the way to Jerusalem, claim his sceptre, and usher in the Golden Age.

Down below flows the Kedron; how often they have crossed it on their way to the sacred shadows of Gethsemane! In the distance are the homes and temples of Jerusalem. Whichever way they look is holy ground. The footprints of their Lord are on every path and hillside. Memories come crowding thick and fast upon the minds of these watchers of Olivet,—when suddenly he stands among them!

“Peace be unto you!” How eagerly they gaze upon the face that so lately was marked with anguish

and blood. The greetings over, they unburden their minds: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replies, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." Then he renews the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit; and repeats the injunction, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel!" They gather around him in love and wonder and reverence; he lifts his pierced hands in blessing, and slowly rises from their midst. "Earth has lost her power to keep; the waiting heaven's claim him." As he ascends through the yielding air his eyes are bent on his disciples; his arms are outstretched, and his voice, heard for the last time, dies away in benediction. They utter no despairing cry like that of the prophet on the banks of the Jordan; but silently, with strained eyes, follow him upward into the deep blue till the clouds, like a white pavilion, enfold him. There are flashes of gold like chariots, vibrations of light like the waving of silken banners, then a crimson glory like the rolling back of heaven's gates.

How simple, yet sublime, this parting of Christ from his earthly friends! But who shall tell what took place behind the receiving clouds? In what new form of majesty, with what swift flight through the rare, cloudless ether, by what celestial hosts attended and with what rhapsodies of song, was this King of Glory carried through the everlasting gates and welcomed to the holy hill? Did these disciples kneeling on Olivet with upturned faces hear as from afar off, from beyond the distant sun, an echo of the ancient war cry of prophecy, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet!" or a mingled sound as of many waters, when their risen

Lord passed through the prostrate ranks of the great multitude, while angels that excel in strength and elders with harps and vials full of odors bowed low and sang, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing"; and ten thousand times ten thousand with a voice like the roll of the ocean, cried, "Amen," as he sat down to reign forever, King of kings, on the throne of heaven—were these the visions that passed before the bewildered eyes of the disciples that day?

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Two men in white apparel are before them, and with these words they recall the followers of Christ from their contemplation of the voiceless skies. This is no hour for reverie. Life with its tasks and trials is before them. The world still shrouded in darkness calls to them for help. It is theirs to reap the harvest of immortal souls. "Make bare your arms; thrust in the sickle; lo, the fields are white. Go ye, evangelize!" It is no time to be dreaming over the past or seeking with curious eyes to pierce the veil behind which the Lord has disappeared. "Why gaze ye upward? This same Jesus who is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go!"

It is written that the disciples then went back to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. A new watchword was in their hearts and on their lips, "Maranatha!" "Our Lord cometh." What strength and inspiration; what earnest of victory and princely promotion, are in that word! It was their morning greeting: "Our Lord cometh!" Why should they tremble at the ana-

thema or the roaring of the beasts of Ephesus? He shall so come as we have seen him go into heaven. The eagles of hated Rome shall be dragged in the dust, and the followers of the Nazarene shall tread their enemies under foot. He shall take unto him his great power and reign more magnificent than Solomon in all his glory. By this hope they were sustained amid persecution until the years went by and, weary of watching the skies, one by one the disciples fell on sleep. An old man on a distant island in the Ægean was left alone, dreaming dreams and seeing visions. One day the Voice said, "Behold, I come quickly!" He answered, "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus"; and thus entered into rest.

Now eighteen centuries have passed and still the eyes of the Lord's people are turned toward the East. The years pass and the ages with their slow revolving wheels; and hope deferred maketh the heart sick. "How long, O Lord, how long! Come, and make no tarrying." But the word of the Lord is Yea and Amen. It is not for us to know the times or the seasons, but his promise standeth sure. "He shall so come as ye have seen him go into heaven."

I. *This means that he shall surely come; as surely as they saw him go into heaven.* There is no uncertain sound in the word of Scripture at this point, and a "Thus saith the Lord" should be to us for an end of controversy. It was predicted by our Lord himself that in the last days, by reason of his long tarrying, there would be misgivings; "When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" So Peter warned the disciples that scoffers would appear in the latter days, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" And to meet this he reminded them how

the deluge was long delayed, but came at last when it was not looked for : "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man." How was it in the days of Noah ? An old man hundreds of miles from the nearest water busied himself for one hundred and twenty years in the building of a boat, meanwhile exhorting the people to repent, because the Lord would overwhelm the world. Did they believe his word ? Nay ; they thought him demented. As they passed by, seeing him engaged with saw and hammer year after year, they derided him. "Old man, what are the signs of the weather ? A fine boat this ! When do you propose to launch it ?" But the flood came ; the flood came in an hour when they thought not and swept them all away. So says Peter, "A thousand years are with God as one day, and one day as a thousand years." But of his coming in the fulness of time there is no doubt whatever. The word of the Lord standeth sure.

II. *He shall come visibly.* They saw him go and they shall see him come. Every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him. *Hiscæ oculis !* "With these eyes !"

There is a thrilling representation of the Second Advent in the opening of the sixth seal of the Apocalypse : "And lo, there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and the stars of heaven fell, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and the mountains and islands were moved out of their places. And the kings and potentates and mighty men came forth." These were the same who had opposed the



claims of Messiah, saying, "Let us break his bands asunder and cast away his cords from us." Now, behold, what panic among them ! what blanching of faces ! He whom they scourged and spit upon and nailed to the accursèd tree, is very God of very God. "And they called upon the mountains and the rocks, saying, Fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." The wrath of the Lamb ! Meekness on fire with holy indignation !

Meanwhile the friends of Jesus assembling from every quarter have turned their faces toward the throne. In their divine Friend they behold the chiefest among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely. The great consummation has come. Their hopes are realized. The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now.

I remember as a lad hearing the story of an old woman who had stood in the procession that welcomed Washington on his return from war. Her dim eyes kindled with enthusiasm, as she told of that splendid day. How the girls of the village were clad in white dresses with red sashes and stars and green garlands—how they strewed flowers in the way of the conqueror. But what will be the gladness of that day when we shall behold our Lord coming in the clouds of heaven ; coming to receive his own and to reign King over all and blessed forever !

III. *He shall come personally.* Not merely as some suppose in spiritual manifestation or in demonstration of his moral power, but *in propria persona*. "This same Jesus whom ye have seen go into heaven shall so come."

He shall be the very God-Man who dwelt among

us. The blending of Deity and humanity in the incarnation was not for a temporary purpose. He is *Theanthropos* forever—one with us in an eternal fellowship. His eyes are the same eyes that during his earthly ministry looked with compassion on suffering men; his feet are the same feet that trod the highways of Galilee; his hands are the same hands that were outstretched in mercy; his heart is the same heart that beat responsive to the world's need and broke under the burden of the world's sin.

We shall be able to identify him by the very scars of his suffering. John in his vision saw him as a "Lamb that had been slain." His wound-prints are the vindication of his people's right to pardon and eternal life.

" Five bleeding wounds he bears,  
Received on Calvary;  
They pour effectual prayers,  
They strongly plead for me."

But his body, though identical with that which he wore during his ministry on earth, is changed. Somewhere between the mount of ascension and the throne it was changed. It must be spiritualized to fit it for the spiritual realm. All things in nature and grace are adjusted to their environment. The butterfly and the caterpillar are the same; only the former was made to fly and the latter to crawl. In the bulb which is planted in the earth there is all the potency of the flower; bulb and tuberoses are the same; but the former was made for a home beneath the ground, the latter to fill the atmosphere with beauty and perfume. The body of Jesus to-day is the very same that was laid away in the sepulchre; nevertheless a

change beyond any of the metamorphoses of Ovid has passed upon it. And this is the earnest and foregleam of what shall occur with us : "For, behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." In all the ritual of the universal Church there is nothing more glad-some than the Burial Service in which we are accustomed to say : "We do now commit this body to the ground ; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust ; looking for the general resurrection, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; at whose advent the earth and the sea shall give up their dead ; and the corruptible bodies of them that sleep in him shall be made like unto his own glorious body." In like manner John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

IV. *He shall come gloriously.* There are three tokens of the splendor of his advent. First, *the trumpet*. This is in the hand of the herald who goes before to announce the coming of the King. Second, *the cloud* ; not the dust-cloud that rises when the chariot of the king rolls hither with outriders before it, but the Shekinah of the Lord, which is called "His most excellent glory." It is the same cloud that stood above the Tabernacle ; that led the children of Israel through their wilderness journey ; that enfolded the disciples upon the Mount of Transfiguration. The cloud that served as his pavilion shall, at his advent, be the chariot of the King. Third, *the retinue of angels*. When he came to Bethlehem a mother bent over his cradle, a few rustics looked in through the stable door, a group of shepherds knelt

beside him, and a company of wise men came thither on camels to lay their gold and frankincense and myrrh before his feet. When he made his missionary journeys among the villages of Palestine, he was followed by a company of fishermen and other humble folk. One bright day in the spring of 29 he and his disciples with a multitude of Passover-pilgrims turned the spur of Olivet; at sight of the domes of Jerusalem a cry was raised by those who went before and those that followed after: "Hosanna! hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" But at his final appearing the shining seats of heaven will be emptied to furnish his retinue, the skies will glow with gilded chariots, the clouds will wave like banners, and he, coming on before clothed in a garment dipped in blood, will be followed by the white squadron, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, crying, "Worthy art thou to receive honor and glory and power and dominion forever and ever!'

V. *He will come beneficently.* His coming in the incarnation was to redeem the world. The word which he uttered on the cross, "It is finished!" marked the beginning of the end. The work goes on and will reach its final consummation when he appears again in the clouds of heaven. Then will occur the restitution of all things.

Sin will be destroyed from the earth in that day; sin that ruins homes and pollutes society and blasts the very fields; sin, the only curse the world has ever known, the trail of the serpent over all. His fan shall be in his hand at his appearing, and he shall thoroughly purge the floor; sin shall be swept

away as chaff is swept away by the wind, and righteousness shall be established forever on earth.

The wicked shall be banished to their own place. This also shall be done in mercy ; for the world purified would be a very hell for those whose characters have been established in sin. No dram-shops, no brothels, no gambling hells ! What would the wicked do ? Such an earth would be a very hell to them. It is, therefore, in mercy that they are driven to their own place.

Then Christ shall take his place upon the throne and usher in the Golden Age. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before him into singing ; and the trees of the field shall clap their hands before him. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree : and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. New heavens and a new earth. The temple of Janus shall be shut forever. No man shall need to say, " Know thou the Lord," for all shall know him, from the least unto the greatest. And Jesus shall reign from the river unto the ends of the earth. So shall be ushered in the Golden Age.

But when shall these things be ? " Take heed lest any deceive you. If any man shall say, Lo here, or lo there, believe him not. For as the lightning cometh, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be." It was believed at the close of the tenth century that the world was coming to an end. At that time wars, plagues, famines, the breaking up of social order, were thought to be signs of dissolution in heaven and earth. At the approach of the year 1000 the people, with one consent, prepared for

the Advent of the King. All work was suspended ; the land was left untilled. Henry the Emperor of Germany came down from his throne, donned a monk's cowl, and went preaching, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Crowds of the people slept in the porches and under the shadow of cathedrals. The Truce of God was proclaimed. The pulpits rang with the visions of the Apocalypse. Thus the last night of the year was reached. All that night the streets and open fields and monastery roofs were filled with men and women watching the skies. The hours went by ; midnight came ; the stars paled ; the first faint streak of the morning was seen in the East ; and then, as if a great burden had been lifted from its heart, the world arose from its paralysis of fear and turned again to the earnest duties of life. "Soldiers of Christ," cried Sylvester, "arise and fight for Zion !" The Crusades began. New plans of royal conquest were suggested. At this time were laid the broad and deep foundations of those mediæval cathedrals which, with their buttressed towers, bear witness to-day to the enthusiasm of a world born anew into the hope of a vigorous life.

It is useless to busy ourselves with prophetic arithmetic. The key of Daniel's mystical figures hangs at God's girdle. And the question, "When comest thou?" is of far less importance than "What wilt thou have me to do?" Hear then the conclusion of the whole matter : "Watch ! And again I say unto you, Watch ! For yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry." A brave song was that of Charles Kingsley :

“ Who would sit down and sigh for a lost *Age of Gold* ‘  
When the Lord of all ages is here ?  
True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God,  
And those who can suffer, can dare.  
Each old Age of Gold was an Iron Age too,  
And the meekest of saints can find stern work to do,  
In the *Day of the Lord at hand !*”

On the famous “dark day” in 1780 the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut in session at Hartford was greatly alarmed by the unaccountable veiling of the sun at high noon. A whisper passed among the legislators that this might possibly be the end of the world. At this juncture Colonel Davenport arose and moved that candles be brought and that they proceed with the work in hand. “For,” he said, “if this is indeed the end of the world, I am sure the Master can find us no better employed than in attending to our appointed tasks.”

Here is the Master’s word : “ Let your loins be girt—as for labor—and your lights be burning—as in vigil—and ye yourselves like men that wait for the coming of their Lord ; that when he cometh and knocketh, at even or at midnight or at cock-crowing or in the morning, ye may open unto him immediately.” Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus !





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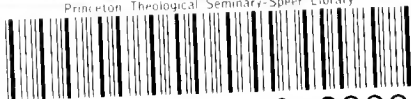
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